

Elementary ENGLISH

MAY 1947

THE EVIDENCE ON
GRAMMAR TEACHING
HARRY A. GREENE

ARTICLES BY

ROLLINS DANN BOWDEN
WERNER and WEAVER
ARBUTHNOT

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Elementary ENGLISH

An official organ of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
211 W. 68th Street, Chicago 21, Illinois

FOUNDED, 1924, BY C. C. CERTAIN

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Published
October through May
\$2.50 per year

MAY, 1947

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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH is published monthly from October to May by the National Council of Teachers of English at 211 West 68th Street, Chicago, Illinois. Subscription price \$2.50 per year; single copies 40 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single copy rate. Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoan Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. Postage is charge extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscription (total \$2.74), on single copies 3 cents (total 43 cents.) Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH in checks, money orders or bank drafts. Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. All communications should be addressed to THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, 211 West 68th Street, Chicago, Illinois. Entered as second class matter December 30, 1942, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois under the Act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Seymour, Indiana.

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Printed in the U. S. A.

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

Vol. XIV

MAY 1947

No. 5

Direct versus Formal Methods in Elementary English

HARRY A. GREENE¹

THE HISTORY of method in the teaching of English is a record of a series of conflicting theories arising largely from differences in the current educational philosophies and psychologies of learning. For example, today we find frequent expression of the notion that the curriculum with its statements of social objective and skill outcomes is not only not necessary but is even undesirable. In contrast with this point of view there is fortunately a sizable group of educators who are still convinced that (1) there are certain knowledges, skills, and attitudes which the race and society have found useful; that (2) the individual fits better into his place in society when he knows these things; and that (3) it doesn't do the child any special mental, emotional or physical harm to have to learn some things of social worth. It is difficult to see how any of the badly needed improvements in our educational program shall ever be accomplished unless some such definite social philosophy can be used as a foundation. Moreover, unless the desirability of having the child learn something of social and personal value can be taken somewhat for granted there is little point in concerning ourselves with problems of method.

The fact that the development of skill in English expression is

¹Professor of Education, University of Iowa.

so closely related to the use that is made of it in other subject-matter fields and activities has given rise to another point of conflict—the belief that language mastery is largely a matter of incidental learning. While there is unquestionably some transferred learning in language skill, there is little in most acceptable theories of learning to encourage us in the belief that systematic instruction is not necessary. A very close correlation exists between English and the pupil's expressional needs in all of his school and life activities, but to the skillful teacher there is nothing incidental about that. It merely means that the teacher sees to it that the proper skills are woven into the child's activities at a time when they are socially useful to him.

The third conflict of points of view in English involves both method and content. It is almost axiomatic that where the methods are formal, the curriculum is general in its content. On the other hand, where direct methods are employed, the learning becomes a matter of mastering only the expressional skills which have high social importance, rather than the memorization of general principles which purport to govern them. Thus the issue resolves itself into a matter of point of view which definitely determines the nature of the subject matter. Perhaps the formal approach with its general subject matter has survived because it is easier to set up general objectives than it is to establish the exact identity of the skills which carry the social burden in expression. Then, too, the grammatical approach has been a natural result of our training program, for many of our teachers have been trained along these lines in their methods classes. The result has been a continued emphasis on grammar in the textbooks for upper elementary and high school grades, not because the evidence warrants it, but because teachers demand it. For obvious reasons editors and publishers aim to give teachers the kinds of textbooks they want.

Complexity of the Language Problem

The reason for the delay which has accompanied the development of a modern program of instruction in language may not be readily

apparent to one who has not tried to do curriculum work in language. Here the curriculum maker in elementary language faces a number of problems peculiar to the subject. The first of these is the great complexity of the subject itself. Language simply does not lend itself readily to analysis into hierarchies of habits or related skills as is true in the case of many other subjects such as arithmetic. Another factor is the matter of authority. The correctness of a numerical fact can be verified. A word is misspelled if it does not conform to a dictionary spelling. But in language usage apparently the authority in each case is the individual author himself. Some progress has been made in the solution of this problem by the work of Leonard², Marckwardt and Walcott³, and by the writer's Criterion for the Course of Study in the Mechanics of Written Composition.⁴ The third of these major problems which have handicapped the language curriculum worker is that of securing objective and reliable information on the nature and frequency of written and oral usages. Millions of running words of the writing of children have been analyzed in attempts to identify the important usage and mechanical skills in written expressions. In a similar way numerous attempts have been made to record and analyze oral expression, but at best such data are artificial for they too largely reflect only school stimulated activities. It is to be regretted, but it must be admitted that we have a long way to go in the development of a socially evaluated language curriculum.

Conflicting Viewpoints

In recent years the teaching of English has been tossed back and forth between two conflicting points of view—the formal-grammatical and the direct-associational. Up to 1850 the language curriculum was almost entirely dominated by grammar. During the

²Leonard, Sterling A., *Current English Usage*. English Monograph Number 1, National Council of Teachers of English. The Inland Press, 1932.

³Marckwardt, Albert H., and Walcott, Fred G., *Facts about Current English Usage*. English Monograph Number 7, National Council of Teachers of English. New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938.

⁴Greene, Harry A., *A Criterion for the Course of Study in the Mechanics of Written Composition*. Studies in Education, New Series No. 246. Iowa City, University of Iowa, March 1, 1933.

next sixty years grammar held an important place among the disciplinary subjects, and instruction in formal grammar gained many supporters as a method of teaching English. Many well-intentioned educators still hold that belief today, as is shown by the division of opinion among authors and editors of English textbooks. Perhaps much of the difficulty arises because of the lack of a clear statement of what is meant by grammar.

In his last book, Ward⁵ presented a very helpful statement of the functions of grammar. First, grammar is conceived by some to be largely a study of the forms and classifications of single words. This type of grammar is now conceded to be obsolete and almost worthless. The second conception of the purpose of grammar is that it improves the thought processes. Perhaps grammar could be a help toward straight thinking, but thus far no curriculum has shown the way to this achievement. The third is that grammar aims at correct idiom by a study of rules. This may be a legitimate objective but it appears to operate most effectively from the adult and editorial angle. Ward himself placed great emphasis on the fourth conception of the purposes of grammar: *to attain an understanding of sentences*. As a matter of fact, those who defend formal grammar do so primarily on the basis of that purpose. It implies that grammar should be taught, not for the sake of grammar as the science of language, but for the purpose of developing a knowledge of sentence elements which are necessary for the improvement of composition.

If the importance of that function of grammatical instruction may be assumed, then there is reason to expect that systematic instruction on the recognition of such definite elements of the sentence as the complete subject or the complete predicate should result in a definite improvement in sentence mastery. Surprisingly enough, this does not seem to follow. Numerous studies have failed to show any important relation between the amount of grammatical information possessed by children and their ability to read and

⁵Ward, C. H., *Grammar for Composition*, Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1933.

comprehend the meaning of sentences or their ability on English usage tests. Pupils making high scores on grammatical information tests make low scores on related usage exercises. The reverse is equally true.

Does Formal Grammar Improve Language?

The long history of experimental research in transfer of training fails almost uniformly to reveal any significant relationship between the study of formal grammar and the development of skills in English expression. The most significant result thus far is that many exaggerated claims for grammar have been modified. In recent years the trend among students of English methods has been to emphasize only those aspects of grammar which are said to be functional. In spite of the fact that practically every authoritative report since 1913 has stressed functional grammar rather than structural, there is still no very exact agreement on a definition of "functional". Newsome has perhaps come as near to defining the issues as any one in her sliding scale of grammar values in which she classifies grammatical elements as functional, formal, useless, and pernicious. Rivlin defined "functional" as "that application of the knowledge of a grammatical item which will prevent the commission of an error in English or will assist in the correction of an error already made." This definition obviously presumes the omission of much formal grammar, predicates a change in grammar teaching from a memory to a thought process, and places grammar in its rightful place as a highly valuable editorial instrument. It seems reasonable to conclude that any element which helps in recognizing, interpreting, or constructing sentences may be said to be functional. While this definition may not be universally accepted it does express quite closely the consensus of opinion of most grammarians and many teachers of English. Moreover, it provides an excellent basis for planning some much-needed research in the field of English methods.

The recognition of the sentence as the focal point of language instruction raises definitely the question of the methods by which this mastery of the sentence may best be obtained. One school of

thought holds that such mastery is best secured through the analysis and diagraming of sentences. The other believes just as firmly that correct language habits are developed in accordance with the general laws of habit formation, and that the way to mastery of the sentence is through extensive experience in the formulation of sentences. The later procedure is what is meant in this discussion by the term "direct" method.

Does Diagraming Help?

Diagraming of sentences was widely used as a method of teaching in the language-composition area from early records in educational methods until well into the 1920's. Then, for no apparent reason based on research, it was discarded almost entirely from the textbooks for use in elementary and high schools. Within the past ten years diagraming has returned for no more reason apparently than it disappeared. Probably because it was traditional, some schools used the method continuously. Those who seek evidence that the practice of diagraming is regaining popularity need only examine the current methods books and upper grade language textbooks. Since 1935 there has been a frank return to the use of simple diagrams to aid pupils in understanding sentence structure. Moreover, many of the authors and editors feel that there is no educational malpractice in making a diagram of a sentence. They point out that sentence diagrams serve a useful purpose if through their visual appeal they make clear the construction of sentences and thus aid the pupil in understanding these sentences and later to construct sentences of his own on similar patterns. They hold that if the pupil cannot express in some graphic way the structure of sentences, he does not understand sentences.

In view of the rather wide-spread belief in diagraming as an effective method of developing sentence mastery, it would appear to be legitimate to expect to find considerable experimental evidence supporting it in the professional literature. A careful search of all available compilations of investigations in the field of language composition from 1900 to 1941 was made. Lyman's⁶ Summary of

Investigations published in 1929 reported approximately 250 studies dealing with grammar, language and composition and not one of these studies mentioned diagraming in any way. Later summaries of research by Lyman, Dora V. Smith⁷, J. P. Leonard⁸, and by the writer⁹ covering hundreds of additional titles still revealed no study prior to 1940 which definitely considered the diagraming of sentences. The lists of theses and studies from educational institutions throughout the United States under the heading of language and composition in the twelve volumes comprising the *Bibliography of Research Studies in Education* covering the period from 1928 to 1941 were consulted with the same results. The titles and the notations concerning the findings of specific studies gave no indication that diagraming of sentences had been subjected to experimental attack.

This acceptance of a teaching procedure without any supporting evidence suggested the need for a series of experimental studies designed to evaluate the contributions of sentence diagraming and of grammatical instruction to the ability to construct correct, interesting, and varied sentences, and to punctuate them correctly. There are four studies in this series. Two preliminary studies are briefly mentioned. Two are quite important investigations and are presented in some detail.

The first of the preliminary studies was a master's thesis completed in 1940 by Mr. Kenneth Barghahn¹⁰. Two roughly equated classes of ninth grade pupils taught by the investigator were both pre-tested with an English correctness test, a silent reading test, and a specially constructed diagraming test. One group was given

⁷Lyman, R. L., *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*. Supplementary Educational Monographs Number 36. Chicago: The University of Chicago, January, 1929.

⁸Smith, Dora V., "The Contributions of Research to Teaching and Curriculum-making in English." *English Journal* 27:295-311, 409-420; April-May, 1938.

⁹Leonard, John Paul, "Language Arts—English." *Implications of Research for the Classroom Teacher*. Joint Yearbook of the American Education Research Association and the Department of Classroom Teachers. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1939. P. 118-27.

¹⁰Greene, H. A., "English Language, Grammar, and Composition." *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941.

¹⁰Barghahn, Kenneth C., "The Effects of Sentence Diagraming on English Usage and Reading Comprehension." Unpublished Masters' Thesis, University of Iowa, 1940.

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intensive drill in diagraming for six weeks; the other group continued its regular class work in English without any emphasis on diagraming or sentence analysis. At the end of the period both groups were re-tested using alternate forms of the reading and diagraming tests. Within the limitations of the data these conclusions were drawn:

1. Instruction in diagraming resulted in a significant and expected increase in skill in diagraming.
2. The teaching of diagraming contributed little or nothing to comprehension in silent reading as measured by the tests used.
3. Drill in diagraming did not appear to contribute to the more rapid acquisition of knowledge of English correctness.

The second of the preliminary studies was completed by Mr. Barnett¹¹ in 1942. The general plan of the study was similar to the one just described except that a more careful pairing of the pupils in the two tenth-grade sections was secured, and a twelve-week instead of a six-week instructional period was used. Barnett's conclusions are almost identical with those just given.

One of the serious weaknesses of much educational research, and certainly of the two studies just described, is that the investigations are usually static rather than dynamic. That is, they measure the relation between existing knowledge and skill in English expression rather than the improvement effect in one field upon skill in another. With the foregoing results and limitations in mind a further refinement of the research program was made in which the dynamic factors would be stressed. The first of these studies was completed by Dr. J. R. Stewart¹² in 1941. The second study was completed by Dr. C. J. Butterfield¹³ in 1945.

The purpose of Dr. Stewart's investigation was to evaluate experimentally sentence diagraming as a method of teaching certain phases of language composition; namely, usage, capitalization, pun-

¹¹Barnett, Walter W., "A Study of the Effects of Sentence Diagraming on English Correctness and Silent Reading Ability." Unpublished Masters' Thesis, University of Iowa, 1942.

¹²Stewart, James Reece, "The Effect of Diagraming on Certain Skills in English Composition." Unpublished dissertation submitted for the Ph. D. degree, University of Iowa, 1941.

¹³Butterfield, Claire J., "The Effect of a Knowledge of Certain Grammatical Elements on the Acquisition and Retention of Punctuation Skills." Unpublished dissertation submitted for the Ph. D. degree, University of Iowa, 1945.

ctuation, grammar information, and sentence structure. The subjects included approximately one thousand pupils enrolled in ninth-grade English classes in twenty-two Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota school systems. Each of the pairs of classes was taught by the same teacher, was not grouped according to ability, and was from a school in which little or no diagraming had been taught during the past five years. On a random basis one of the two classes in each school was designated as a control group and the other as an experimental group. An intitial testing program composed of tests of the five phases of language composition named above was carried out. Immediately after the initial testing all classes began an eight-week period of intensive study of certain concepts in English from special instructional booklets prepared by the investigator. The experimental classes devoted their time almost exclusively to learning by diagraming sentences. The control classes expended exactly the same amount of time in learning identical concepts by the use of composition exercises. That is, the excercise books used by the control classes presented exactly the same language skills as were taught to the experimental groups but were taught by extensive excercises in the writing of original sentences and in the re-writing of poor sentences.

The usage, capitalization, and punctuation sections of the 1940 *Iowa Every-Pupil Test in English Correctness* were used in the intitial testing program. The three comparable sections of the 1939 *Iowa Every-Pupil Test in English Correctness* were used in the final testing program. A seventy-item grammar information test composed of certain critical items selected from Forms A and B of the *Iowa Grammar Information Test* and thirty-two new items was used in both the intitial and final testings in this study. Since diagraming is concerned with the structure of the individual sentence it was apparent that a special criterion device was needed which would measure the ability of the pupil to construct sentences. A survey showed that no existing measuring devices quite met this need. Accordingly, it was decided to attempt to produce an instrument which would

evaluate the quality of sentences as constructed by the pupils. The actual construction and validation of this novel instrument was a contribution in itself. In this experimental sentence-structure test ideas were supplied in short simple statements and the pupils were asked to organize them into the most interesting and effective sentences possible. The operations necessary to combine these ideas into effective sentences constituted the point score on the test. Twenty different grammatical factors involved in sentence structure were tested in the final sentence structure test. A special diagraming test was constructed for use in the final testing program. This test covered approximately two-thirds of the concepts taught during the eight-weeks instructional period. These tests, being the criterion measures for this study, were carefully analyzed for statistical evidences of validity, item discrimination, and reliability.

The data for this experiment were treated by the method of analysis of covariance which, by the use of initial measures, secures the same increase in precision as does the exact matching or equating of groups. Subject to certain inescapable limitations, such as the teacher's personal attitude toward one method or the other, unidentified faults in the evaluating devices, or the length of the experimental period, the following conclusions were stated by Dr. Stewart:

1. The learning of capitalization, punctuation, and English usage is no more pronounced under the instructional program composed largely of diagraming exercises than it was under the one emphasizing composition exercises.
2. The diagraming of sentences is no more effective in teaching grammar information than is a direct emphasis on composition as such.
3. Sentence structure is developed as effectively by a composition method as it is by the diagraming of sentences.

Grammar and Punctuation

The second of the major studies in this research program was designed to determine how much the teaching of certain gram-

matical elements affects the skill with which sixth, seventh, and eighth grade pupils are able to use certain selected punctuation skills which are said to depend upon them. In order to accomplish this purpose it was necessary (1) to isolate the punctuation variants which have been found to be essential to an effective language program and (2) to identify the elements of functional grammar which are said to be basic to an understanding and a mastery of these specific mechanical skills.

Since the purpose of this study was to determine whether or not these grammatical elements were functional when applied to the development of punctuation skills, the identity of these punctuation skills was next established. Fifty punctuation variants were selected from an analysis made by Dr. J. W. Evans¹⁴ in which he determined the punctuation skills which carry the major burden of usage in five types of compositions written by pupils in grades four to eight. The following criteria were used in selecting these variants: (1) the difficulty index; (2) the index of discrimination; (3) the unit frequency of each at the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade levels, and (4) the relationship that exists between the variants and the thirty-five functional elements of grammar mentioned previously. Of these punctuation variants, 1 dealt with the period, 39 with the comma, 4 with the apostrophe, 4 with the semicolon, 1 with the interrogation point, and 1 with the colon.

Since the determination of the elements of grammar that are functional is largely a matter of opinion, three separate criteria were followed. First, grammar items were selected from lists which were reported in research studies as having specific functional applications in composition. Then each item was further verified by checking the content of representative courses of study, textbooks, and workbooks. As a final determining factor, three well-qualified teachers of English were asked to point out independently the specific functional application of each grammatical item to the punctuation skills in-

¹⁴Evans, James W., "The Social Importance and the Pupil Control of Certain Punctuation Variants." Unpublished dissertation submitted for the Ph. D. degree, University of Iowa, 1939.

volved. Thirty-five elements of grammar meeting these three criteria were finally selected.

Two sets of instructional materials were prepared and used under controlled conditions with 831 pupils from nineteen midwestern city school systems. Two groups of pupils were selected from each of the schools participating in the experiment. The classes consisted of approximately the same number of pupils and each pair in a given school was taught by the same teacher. One set of the teaching materials was adapted from a recent commercial textbook in which instruction in grammar and in punctuation is integrated in such a manner as to emphasize the functional relationships which are thought to exist between them. The other set of instructional materials was adapted from a textbook that used the "thinking" approach to punctuation. This approach holds that a knowledge of grammar is a very incidental part of punctuation problems, and stresses the importance of reading the marks correctly as well as putting them where they will aid the reader.

Under experimental and statistical conditions quite similar to those followed in the Stewart study, initial and final tests of established validity and reliability were administered and interpreted. Subject again to such inescapable limitations as the possibility that the grammatical elements selected might not have the expected high degree of relationship to the punctuation variants, or the existence of a definite prejudice on the part of the teachers favoring one method or the other, or the limited validity of the measuring devices used, the following conclusions seem to be statistically defensible:

1. The students who were taught grammar as such revealed, as might have been expected, significantly higher accomplishment in grammar than students who were taught by the other method, but grammatical knowledge did not appear to transfer into the area of skill in punctuation to any appreciable extent in spite of the fact that the two were supposed to be functionally related.
2. Significantly superior results in punctuation were obtained by the direct method.

General Conclusions

The results of educational research are valuable only to the degree that they affect practice. The implications of the studies just reported are of practical significance. The three studies dealing with sentence diagraming indicate uniformly that diagraming is a skill which can be developed but has little or no value in itself. It does not lend itself to correlation with other subjects or projects or the program of the school. There is little point of training the pupil to graphically portray sentences except for the improvement which it brings to his ability to write effectively. The evidence shows that this is slight. There is considerable question, therefore, of the advisability of employing sentence diagraming as a method of developing language mastery. In the light of the data secured by Butterfield, there is reason to expect superior results in the teaching of punctuation by direct methods rather than by methods which are based upon a knowledge of related grammatical elements. Punctuation is a function of meaning rather than a function of grammar. Furthermore, the description of the grammatical elements of a sentence often must be deferred until the punctuation is completed according to the meaning intended.

The results of the experiments presented here are believed to be convincing. They all point in the same direction. Evidently the indirect methods by which we have been attempting to teach pupils to write the English they will need in life have largely failed to function. The evidence shows that repeated and spaced habit-forming experiences are productive of mastery and should be substituted for formal rules and exercises whose values as a part of teaching method are at least open to question. Let us reserve the grammar for later adult editorial use.

Some Children's Books For One World

CHARLEMAE ROLLINS¹

IN THE November issue of *Young Wings*, the Junior Literary Guild magazine, Dola de Jong, distinguished Dutch author, writes that she is "Fighting the Windmills." She wants us to know the real story of Holland—which, contrary to popular belief, is a modern country of stream-lined trains, large airports, modern architecture and people who dress just as we do. She feels that we must first know these people; then we can work together for international understanding. And so she has written a story of Holland which she feels will help to build this understanding.

Just as Dola de Jong is fighting the "Windmill-wooden shoe, dikes and tulips" ideas about Holland, some of us in America are trying to fight certain popular inaccurate ideas that many books have given people about the Negro. Many of us feel the desperate importance of working toward international understanding and most of us agree that much of this understanding should begin right here at home.

We feel just as does Miss de Jong and others—that books are all important and can help build One Nation.

We all know that a great many books have been written that have stereotyped and caricatured the Negro child and given a false picture of Negroes as a whole. Fortunately these books are now being slowly superseded by excellent books, written by authors and illustrated by artists who are sincerely interested in bringing a true picture of the many different kinds of Negroes who make up America.

As Children's Librarians, we are always anxious to help teachers in every way possible. It is because of this very earnest desire that

¹Children's Librarian at the Hall Branch of the Chicago Public Library. This paper was given before the Council Convention at Atlantic City, November 29, 1946.

I am here today. I have thought a great deal about how I could make this talk as practical and as useful as possible to you. At our Library, we are asked to help individuals and groups in many ways. I decided that perhaps the same questions that are asked by teachers in other places might also be used as a spring-board here. The purpose of this plan is two-fold. It gives me a chance to talk about how books can help you, and it stimulate questions in your minds which you may want to ask.

These are some of the questions that come:

1. "This is my first experience with Negro children; are there any special books that will help me overcome a certain strange feeling when we are together? What books can I offer them that will be wholly acceptable?"
2. "I'd like to be friends with the little Negro children who come into our library; what books should I offer them to help establish some sort of friendly feeling?"
3. "The Negro children coming into our school now seem sullen, resentful, and some are frightened. Is there any way of helping them with books?"
4. "All the white children in my room object to the Negroes who are coming into our community. Surely there must be some books that we could read that will help us toward an understanding."
5. "Why do Negro parents object to *Little Black Sambo*?"
6. "How shall I choose the books which will help me and the children also, toward a broader understanding of our Negro neighbors?"

BOOKS SUGGESTED TO HELP BUILD ONE NATION:²

For little children:

Books which show likenesses rather than differences and which show Negro children in familiar experiences with other children—showing them as being accepted in groups.

²Mrs. Rollins gave a brief comment on each title.

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Two is a Team—Beim
Prayer for a Child—Jones
Small Rain—Jones
Little Child—Jones
Spotty—Rey

For the Middle Grades:

Books which go a "step further".

Bright April—de Angeli
Henry's Lincoln—Neyhart
Homer Price—McCloskey
Captain Kidd's Cow—Stong
The Welcome—Deutsch
Palaces on Monday—Fischer
Starlight—Moody

For the older children:

Books which frankly present the problem of Negro-white relationships and give youngsters a chance to do their own thinking.

All-American—Tunis
Call Me Charley—Jackson
Great Day in the Morning—Means
Bright April—de Angeli
Up at City High—Gollomb

Anthologies which show the Negro as a real part of America:

Topflight—Stoddard
Brave Nurse—Newcomb
Told Under the Star and Stripes
 Other collections of scientists, poets, etc.

Books giving varied phases of Negro life:

My Dog Rinty—Tarry & Ets
My Happy Days—Shackelford
Melindy's Medal—Faulkner
Biographies of Carver, Robeson by Shirley Graham
We Have Tomorrow—Bontemps

Speaking Thoughts Together

JANET ANNE DANN¹

CHORAL SPEAKING is not always accorded the latitude which the phrase itself suggests and permits. Frequently the speaking repertoire of school groups is confined to: (1) mediocre numbers by mediocre poets; (2) old stand-bys in poetry; (3) excellent poetry which is totally unrelated to the mental and emotional experience of children.

Choral speaking which is confined to these three fields offers little in the way of creative experience. Mediocre poetry such as the daily contribution of words which certain individuals make to our newspapers offers no more impetus to creative thinking than does poetry whose vocabulary and symbolisms are beyond child understanding.

Creative experience may occur as a thought or emotional experience stimulated by the printed material itself; or it may consist of the actual creation by an individual, by the entire group, or by the teacher of material common to the experience of the group which lends itself to group presentation. The honesty of thought and feeling in such material, regardless of its structural form and simple vocabulary, gives it more character and meaning than do the ordinary, adult-selected materials.

The following speaking arrangement illustrates the type of choral material which may be developed by a group of children. This particular selection is the work of a fourth grade group which had been studying pioneers.

"Thank You, Neighbors"

Let the tree fall! }
Down falls the tree! } Low voices

Swing the axe }
Swing the axe } Medium voices

¹4th Grade Teacher, Webster School, Pontiac, Michigan.

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Swing it bold,
Swing it high, } High voices

Swing it free! Raise a house, raise a house, Chorus

For my pa, Low voices

For my ma, All

And for me. High voices.

Four strong walls and a puncheon floor,
An oiled-paper window and a leather-hinged door. } All

Thank you, neighbors, for the help you gave.

Thanks for the house you helped us raise.

Won't you come in and share our injun bread? } Low voices

Won't you come, neighbors,
While the fire burns red? } High voices.

Our cabin's door is open wide—

Neighbors, neighbors, come inside. } All

Stay an hour, an hour or more,

And dance with us on our puncheon floors. Trio

Frequently individual children produce material which the group accepts enthusiastically as its own. A fourth grade girl wrote "Yes, I Did," and presented it to the group. The children requested a second reading, and, without any prompting, came in as a choir on "Yes, I Did."

"Yes, I Did"

I saw a goblin
The other night.

Yes, I did!

Yes, I did!

I followed it
A long, long way.

Yes, I did!
Yes, I did!

It led me to
An old, old tree.

Yes, it did!
Yes, it did!

A witch came out
And flew away.

Yes, she did!
Yes, she did!

(Marcia McLintosh, 4A)

The following poem, or perhaps selection is a better word, was developed by a group of children who were waiting for the signal to go to art class.

(Various intonations)

We're going to draw jungle pictures. (1st table of children)

We're going to draw jungle pictures. (2nd table of children)

We're going to draw jungle pictures. (3rd table of children)

In Miss Barrett's room. (Entire group)

I shall draw a tiger walking through the jungle. (one child)

I shall draw Bunga and the home Bunga lives in. (2nd child)

I shall draw pygmies fishing with their spears. (3rd child)

We shall all draw pictures (First table)

In Miss Barrett's room. (all)

Certainly choral speaking need not be confined to the productions of the group. There is much good poetry which children understand and enjoy. Their understanding may be rhythmic as it is

in the Lindsay poem "Calliope," or in parts of "The Congo." It may be an appreciation of the humorous or nonsensical as in Lear's "Jumblies" or in "The Pirate Don Dirk." It may be an enjoyment of the whimsy of Shakespeare's "Where the Bee Sucks, there Suck I," or the imagery of Hodgson's "Eve with Her Basket was Deep in the Bells and Grass."

English instructors in high schools and colleges are constantly lamenting over their students' inability to read comprehensively and to like and appreciate required readings. Their complaints may or may not be justified. Surely the child who has had a broad, meaningful, and satisfying experience with written words is the better equipped to appreciate and evaluate what he reads.

On the basis of the average length of the school term, the average high school graduate in rural schools has had *one school year less of schooling* in his twelve years than the average urban graduate (Rural: 167 day annual average; Urban: 181 days).

\$84.41 *annually* is spent per pupil in average daily attendance in rural schools; \$131.83 in urban schools. \$200 *is the value of school property per pupil enrolled in rural schools* as compared with \$429 per pupil in urban schools.

Of the 100,000 emergency teacher certificates in 1945-46 at least 75,000 are in use in rural schools.

Of the 35,000,000 citizens without library services 32,000,000 live in small villages or in the open country.

Conversation and Discussion in the Elementary School

FLORENCE B. BOWDEN¹

THE EFFECTIVE use of language for purposes of communication depends, I believe, upon two things: first, *using* language frequently, both oral written; second, *learning* what language is and how to use it. It is also my opinion that the classroom schedule should provide at least one period daily when language will be used and studied. A scheduled language period need not minimize the importance of stressing language in all of the day's activities. It does emphasize the importance of the teacher's planning some definite time when she will help her pupils learn to speak, listen, read, and write.

A language program for grades 1-6, I believe, should be built around *conversation, discussion, stories, reports, and dramatizations* for oral expression and around *letters, stories, and reports* for written expression. Learning to use the essential skills for speaking and writing clearly and effectively is equally important for the language program.

Planning for Conversation

Conversation and discussion should receive particular emphasis in grades one to six. A teacher must make as careful and definite plans for conversation or discussion as she does for any other classroom activity. Her initial planning for conversation may involve these steps:

1. Talking with the children about the meaning of conversation
2. Talking with them about the occasions when they use conversation
3. Giving the children sample conversations from textbooks or story books

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4. Pointing out to children what makes a conversation good or poor
5. Talking with children about topics which make interesting conversations
6. Scheduling periods for classroom conversation
7. Talking with children about ways to improve the conversations

Children usually should be prepared for class conversation before they participate in it. The following questions are among those which the teacher may use as a first step in this preparation. The purpose of this questioning and the resultant discussion is to direct the child's attention to what conversation is, when he uses it, and what makes it enjoyable:

1. Do you ever listen to people talk together? What do they talk about?
2. What do you talk about when you talk with your friends?
3. When, during the day, do you talk to others?
4. What things make you enjoy listening to others talk?

Among the points to be brought out through discussion of the above questions and others similar to them will be:

1. The word conversation means that people are talking together about interesting happenings. (From frequent use in context, the words *converse*, *conversed*, and *conversing* should also be taught.)
2. People are also conversing when they use the telephone, when they greet others, or when they make introductions.
3. People converse all day—at home, at play, at work. People need to learn to converse well.
4. A pleasing voice, having interesting things to tell, and being polite help people to converse well.

As a second step in the preparation, the teacher may discuss samples of good and poor conversation with the pupils. She may suggest that the children look through some of their favorite library books to find conversation to read to the class. In either case, she

should again direct the attention of the class to what conversation is and what makes it good.

Pupils should help in choosing the topic or topics for class conversations and should be encouraged to make their choice from their own experiences and interests. Primary and intermediate grade children enjoy talking about the following things:

1. Vacation experiences
2. Pets or wild animals
3. Trips
4. Work and play on a farm or in the city
5. Helping mother or daddy
6. Mischief of younger sisters or brothers
7. Funny happenings

The class should set up its own standards for conversation. These standards may be called guides or rules. The pupils should learn to state the guides in sentence form. As each guide is given by a pupil, it should be written on the board by the teacher. When the list is complete, the children should help arrange the guides in good order.

A chart of the guides, made of large oaktag or other heavy paper and hung in a conspicuous place in the room, is an excellent device for evaluating group conversation. The guide chart may start with these points:

1. Everyone should take part in conversation.
2. Everyone should wait his turn and not interrupt.
3. Everyone should talk about interesting things.
4. No one should talk too many times or too long.

Subsequent conversations may be planned to stress these additional points:

1. Everyone should try to think of comments about something that is said.

2. Every one should try to ask a question to show that he is interested in the conversation.
3. Everyone should listen to show that he is interested and to enjoy what is being told.

Opposite each statement on the guide chart may be drawn several blocks. These blocks will be useful in evaluating group conversations. Checking this guide chart over a period of several weeks will help to show the progress of the class.

The pupils should be seated informally during conversation periods. Where classes are small and moveable furniture is available, both the desks and chairs may be arranged in such a way that the children will face each other. Where classes are large, the chairs may be placed in a circle or two semi-circles in the front or rear of the room. Stationary furniture need not prove a handicap to informal seating. Part of the children may be grouped together in the two front rows of desks. Folding chairs, from an auditorium or other classrooms, may be used to complete a circle. In rooms where fibre or linoleum rugs are used, the children may be seated on these.

The teacher or a pupil should act as a leader. The duties of the leader will be to keep the conversation moving by asking questions and making comments and by assisting when three or four children happen to talk at once. The leader should also aid in the discussion of what made the conversation good and what may be done to improve future conversations.

Conversation periods need not always be confined to the large group. The class may be divided into three or four small groups, depending upon the number of the pupils and upon the number of topics chosen. Conversation in small groups should seldom be tried until after the entire group has had ample opportunity to converse together and learn something of the techniques of conversation.

Through conversation, children may be taught the use of the sentence. They can learn when to use a complete sentence or a

part of a sentence. The use of the complete sentence should not be stressed to the point where conversation becomes stilted or unnatural. However, the children should learn when a complete sentence is necessary to make a thought clear. From this study of sentences, the teachers will need to plan for a few additional practice lessons on recognizing and punctuating sentences.

Speaking in sentences without running them together is a skill which may be emphasized in grades three and four. Phrasing sentences which are clear in meaning because the words are put together in good order is a skill which may be developed in grades five and six. Other skills which may be stressed during the conversation periods are speech skills and listening skills. Some forms of correct usage may also be studied. More mention of the skills is not sufficient. Situations and excercises must be provided where the skills will receive some study and practice.

An individual progress sheet is invaluable to train the pupil in self evaluation. This sheet may be kept in the child's Language Notebook. The sheet may be a copy of the class guide chart. Better still, it may be the child's own statements in sentence form similar to these:

1. I took part in the conversation today. I talked three times.
2. I interrupted only once.
3. I asked two questions.
4. I remembered not to use "ands".

Much that has been said thus far applies particularly to situations in grades three to six. With younger children, the approach to conversation will be much more informal. Frequent conversations about happenings of the day before, happenings on the way to school, and pets are desirable. An excellent way to start conversation with little folks is to have what is frequently called a "show and tell" period. This device is nothing more than encouraging children to bring something from home to share with the other girls and boys.

Children enjoy showing toys, books, pets occasionally, games, and new clothing to their classmates. A real conversation period results from the children's questioning and commenting about what is being shown.

This device also gives the teacher a good opportunity for vocabulary development. Children may put their hands on toys and pets and *feel* that a block is hard and sharp at the corners, that a teddy bear is fuzzy and rough, and that a kitten is soft and silky. They may look at toys and pets and *see* that the block is square or long, the teddy bear fat or brown, and the kitten tiny or white. They may listen and *hear* the block pound or scrape on the desk, the teddy bear squeak or talk, and the kitten mew or cry. Observing and talking about the weather, flowers, trees, turtles, frogs and other forms of nature also stimulates conversation and gives an added opportunity for vocabulary building.

Language skills for younger children should be developed in the simplest way. Perhaps, the greatest stress should be upon the vocabulary building just mentioned. Some emphasis may be given to using whole sentences. The teacher may frequently say, "Tell me about the kitten or the teddy bear in a sentence." After a child has given a good sentence, she may comment with, "I like Barbara's sentence about the kitten."

The conversation of a young child frequently leads to a brief story. The child's first understanding of the use of the sentence, the capital letter, and the period may come from the teacher's recording his story on a chart. As she writes, she should say, "Johnny has three sentences in his story. This is sentence one. It starts with a capital letter. It ends with a period. This is sentence two. Can you find the capital letter and period? Can you find sentence three?"

In the primary grades, considerable attention should be given to speech. Little children usually need to learn to speak out. They can be encouraged to use their voices by saying nursery rhymes together or by saying a sentence as some one else—mother, father,

a bear, a cross old man—might say it. Informal dramatizations of nursery rhymes and stories like "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" help children learn to use their voices.

With younger children it is preferable to hold conversations in small groups of ten or less. The period should seldom last over ten minutes. Conversation guides for the small child may also be charted. They should include only two or three statements similar to these:

1. I will tell something interesting.
2. I will not talk when another girl or boy is talking.
3. I will not talk all of the time.

Preparing for Discussion

Children need preparation for class discussion as well as for class conversation. In planning for discussion, the teacher will probably use several of the steps that she used in her planning for conversation.

Children should learn that discussion means to give one's ideas or opinions about some topic. They need to understand the differences between conversation and discussion. They also need to understand that discussion frequently grows out of conversation and that conversation may be inter-mingled with discussion.

Discussion topics for the primary grades probably should be limited to the planning type—making plans for a trip, a party, an exhibit, or the day's activities. The younger children may also discuss ways to change something in their classroom or school or how to make their work better. Pupils from grades four to six will profit from the more difficult topics of discussion—library books, motion pictures, radio programs, classroom, school, and community problems, and topics centering around social studies content.

The same procedures suggested for conversation will also be effective for discussion—the informal seating, stressing sentence, listening, and speech skills, building vocabulary, and setting-up standards. Discussion standards may include the following:

1. Take part in the discussion.
2. Tell what you think about something.
3. Be polite when you give a different idea.
4. Ask questions when you do not understand something.
5. Listen carefully. Do not repeat what someone else has already said.
6. Listen carefully. Keep to the topic being discussed.
7. Ask questions to find out what others think.

The emphasis in discussion should be upon encouraging the child to express his ideas or feelings. For this reason the teacher must repeatedly use questions to bring out the "how" and the "why".

Making plans to visit a dairy farm offers many opportunities for class discussion. In making the initial plans, the children will need to discuss these points:

1. The day of the week to go; the time of day to go.
2. The means of transportation—bus, train, or parent's cars.
3. Safety and courtesy rules for the trip.
4. Obtaining permission from the principal to take the trip.
5. Writing for permission to visit the farm.
6. Writing questions to ask at the farm.
7. Writing thank-you notes to the people who helped with the trip.
8. Giving oral reports or making booklets about the trip.

After the first plans are made, the children must decide what to do first, second, and third. This discussion will give them practice in organizing plans in simple outline form.

Each step of the original plans will need at least one day's language study and practice. The children may suggest interviewing the principal to ask for permission to go. At this point, the teacher should stress what to say and do in an interview. Practice in interviewing may be given by having simple dramatizations with one

child's taking the part of the principal and the other children's taking the parts of the pupils.

Writing for permission to visit the farm necessitates a study of and practice in the letter form and punctuation, sentences and punctuation, handwriting, proofreading, and what to say. The class must decide which letter or letters will be mailed to the person who owns the farm. The other letters may be placed on the bulletin board for a short time and then filed in the language notebooks.

Writing the questions to ask at the farm will involve vocabulary building. Pictures of dairy farms should be viewed and stories of dairy farms read with the purpose of learning the names of essential dairy equipment and farming practices. These names may be written on a chart and kept for future use.

Writing the questions also involves practice in phrasing questions and in using capital letters and question marks. All of the children should be given an opportunity to ask one or more questions. The class should decide which questions are the best. The "best" questions should mean those stated clearly and those that will produce the desired answers. With younger children, the questions should be written on the board with the teacher calling attention to the capital letters and question marks. Children who can print or write should copy a question or two to take with them on the trip. Older children may write their own questions from those that are being suggested and chosen as the "best" by their classmates.

If the class wishes to give oral reports or to write reports in booklet form, the teacher must show the children *how* to make reports. This may be done by discussing with them what should go into a report, by giving them examples of good and poor reports, and in helping them decide whether their own reports are good or poor. Individual conferences with each child are invaluable in helping him express his thought and improve his work. When the reports are oral, attention should be given to speech skills; when writ-

ten, to manuscript form, sentences, punctuation, and, in the higher grades, paragraphing.

Another illustration of class discussion is planning a Christmas party. In addition to deciding the time and place, party planning will include discussing these steps.

1. Whom to invite.
2. Writing letters of invitation.
3. Planning a program of stories, songs, poems, or a play.
4. Planning refreshments.
5. Choosing pupils to greet parents.
6. Introducing parents.
7. Choosing pupils to pass refreshments.
8. Choosing a pupil chairman.
9. Practicing the program.

Each step for the planning of a party needs several days of language use, study, and practice. The children must learn *how* to greet people and introduce them; *how* to write good stories; *how* to write letters of invitation; *how* to write and give a play; *how* to speak clearly and pleasantly; and *how* to use sentences and punctuation marks.

The teacher may examine the effectiveness of her language program by asking herself these questions:

1. Does it arouse and hold the interest of the pupils?
2. Does it utilize children's experiences?
3. Does it provide ample opportunity for using language?
4. Does it encourage spontaneous oral expression?
5. Does it teach the child *how* to converse, to discuss, to write or give orally brief stories and reports, to dramatize, to write letters, to listen, to use good sentences and punctuation marks, and to speak correctly and in a pleasing voice?
6. Does it help the child to improve his use of language?
7. Does it provide for class-evaluation and self evaluation?

Speech Improvement in the Classroom

LORNA SHOGREN WERNER AND LILLIAN WEAVER¹

THIS IS a report of one semester's speech improvement work carried on by the teacher of a fifth grade class. The pupils in this class were judged by the classroom teacher and the supervisor of speech to have speech which was generally below average. Almost every pupil needed improvement to make his speech understandable and thus bring it to an acceptable level. The most common fault was mumbling—lack of adequate formation of vowels and poor articulation of consonants. Omission of final consonants was also a general characteristic.

Outline of Procedures

- I. Testing the pupils to determine the speech needs
 - A. Each child gave an oral report extemporaneously, and a recording was made.
- II. Arousing the pupil's interest and stimulating the desire to speak more carefully
 - A. Comments and criticisms were given by the speech supervisor.
 - B. Class criticism was encouraged.
 - C. More oral assignments were made.
 - D. Supervised conversations were carried on in class.
- III. Practice material and methods used to improve individual defects:
 - A. Vowel and consonant drills
 - B. Word lists
 - C. Sentences
 - D. Poems
 - E. Speech Exercises
 1. Tongue
 2. Teeth
 3. Jaws
 4. Palate

¹Former supervisor of speech in Webster Groves, Mo., and classroom teacher, respectively.

F. Applied Speech

1. Oral Reading
2. Oral Reports
3. Spelling lessons

IV. Results Achieved:

- A. Speech consciousness of the class
- B. Carefulness in using practiced sounds
- C. Better speech habits in general
- D. Improved ability to recite poems individually
- E. The ability to recite poems in groups
- F. Class appreciation of oral poetry
- G. Improved ability to read and analyze the thought content.

One of the greatest handicaps of this group of children was that the speech of many was so poor that they could not be understood. Through a program of speech improvement carried on for one semester, much progress has been made by the children in acquiring more careful articulation, though there is still need for improvement. A program of this nature carried on the second year should result in still further pupil progress.

Our first procedure was to make a record of each child's speech. Then these recordings were played back for the class. It was amazing to hear the "Ah, Oh, Do I sound like that?" We felt that here a great thing had been done, for the children were ashamed of themselves and wanted to do something about it.

The first step in providing opportunities for improvement was to have the class in as many oral situations as possible. Two days were given each week to current events. This much time was needed because of the size of the class and the number of errors that had to be pointed out individually. Most of these criticisms during the current events periods were brought out by the children themselves. On one occasion the speech supervisor sat in on the group and made suggestions for special work needed by individuals such as exercises for greater volume, better control of a lisp for which remedial work had been given, articulation of final consonants, and the like.

Another difficulty was that most of the class talked too rapidly. After this was carefully pointed out to them, the lessons really became interesting as each child tried to do better than the others.

After the class knew their individual problems and were familiar with those that were general to the class, the next step was to present some material to them for practice. *Better Speech and Better Reading* by Lucille D. Schoolfield was used for much of the work with vowels. The group especially liked the following vowel drills (sounds used for vocal exercises).

1. ah
ay
ee
aw
oh
oo
2. ah ay
 ay ee
 ee aw
 aw oh
 oh oo
3. ah ay ee
 ay ee aw
 ee aw oh
 aw oh oo
4. ah ay ee aw
 ay ee aw oh
 ee aw oh oo
5. ah ay ee aw oh oo
 ay ee aw oh oo
6. ah ay ee aw oh oo

The above exercises gave the class good practice in correct

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vowel formation. It also showed them just what was meant by the term "lazy mouthed."

This work was done both individually and as a group.

A problem of a few children was that they talked too softly. The supervisor made suggestions for increasing volume through abdominal control. These particular children were asked to stand in the back of the room for practice. They were told to talk so that everyone in the room could hear them distinctly.

Since mumbling and not pronouncing the endings of words was a common difficulty, word and sentence drills were the next approach.

Examples

<i>s(z)</i>				<i>ng</i>	<i>nk</i>
eggs	pigs	wags	sing	coming	ink
legs	logs	dogs	sang	going	think
dogs	bugs	bags	song	nothing	sink
logs	wigs	flags	long	something	pink
hogs	rugs	rags	ring	morning	bank
frogs	hugs	drags	wing	evening	thank
			ding	running	drink
			king	dancing	monk
			thing	singing	
			young	swinging	
			hung	springing	
			hang	ringing	
			rang	dinging	
			clang	banging	
			swing	clanging	
			bring	lengthen	
			spring	strengthen	
			string		
			strong		
			among		

Practice Sentences for ng:

1. Can you sing?
2. The bird sang a spring song.
3. He sang, "Spring is coming."
4. Every morning I swing in my swing.
5. My brother and I sing songs until the bell rings.
6. The bell rings Ding Dong, Ding Dong.
7. We think it fun to swing and sing.

Practice Sentences for nk:

1. The sink is too full.
2. I think the ink was pink.
3. I thank you for the drinks that were so cold.
4. It is so nice of you to think of me.

Many words and sentences were used. These are only samples of the type of material which was practiced.

After much practice on endings, vowels, and consonants, we were ready to begin on a longer exercise that would be fun for the class. The following poems were practiced individually at first, and then as a group.

tb (voiceless)

Theophilus Thistle, the successful thistle sifter,
In sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles,
Thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb.
See that thou in sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles,
Thrust not three thousand thistles through the thick of thy thumb.
Success to the successful thistle sifter.

t

Betty Boata bought some butter,
"But, said she "This butter's bitter
If I put it in my batter,
It will make my batter bitter;
But, a bit of better butter

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Will make my batter better.
Then she bought a bit of butter
Better than that bitter butter,
And it made her batter better.

So—" twas better Betty Boata
Bought that bit of better butter.

A tutor who tooted a flute
Tried to tutor two tooter to toot;
Said the two to the tooter
"Is it harder to toot
Or to tutor two tooters to toot?"

In these poems each child was conscious of the sound which was being stressed. He tried very hard to say the exercise correctly, and a distinct improvement in speech was evident.

We have been doing some work on a Pan American Program. Every pupil had a speech about a particular country which was his speech project.

A second recording was made at this time. The pupils gave the Pan American speeches which they had practiced. A definite improvement in each child's speech was observed. (It must be noted here that this second speech was memorized and practiced, while the first was given extemporaneously and with no attention to speech. However, the fact that the pupils knew how to improve their diction and made the necessary effort to do so is sufficient justification for calling attention to the improvement on the second test.) Many of the children spoke so slowly and distinctly that every word was understood. When we had played the second recording, the class wanted to hear the first one again so that they might make comparisons between the two. The children had made remarkable improvement. This class has by no means reached perfection, but the change has been of such a nature that it can be appreciated by the supervisor, the class, and me.

The supervisor was the guest speaker at one of the class' Room Mothers Meetings. She brought the records to the meeting and used them as the basis for her talk. The mothers were interested and wanted to hear the final report on the outcome of another year's speech training.

The last project for the year is the following excerpt which contains all the sounds of speech.

In a starry night of June, before the moon had come over into our valley from the high valley beyond,
Up the winding mountain-lane I wandered, and, stopping, leaned on the bars, and listened:
And I heard the little brook sliding from stone to stone; and I heard the sound of the bells as the cows moved—heavily, slowly, In various keys, deep, like sleigh-bells tinkling, sounded the chiming cow-bells—
Starting and stilling, irregular; near or far away in the dusk—
And the nearer cows I heard chewing the cud, and breathing warm on the cool air of the mountain slope
In the night pasture.

"The Night Pasture"—Richard Watson Gilder

The class really became speech conscious. During all reading and oral recitation good speech was stressed. In this way the speech practice given during special periods could be applied and speech correlated with practically every other lesson in our daily curriculum.

Why, despite the fact that it is highly recommended, is there so little use made of laymen in planning school programs, is the provocative question put in a recently issued bulletin of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA. The author is Helen F. Storen, Curriculum Coordinator at Tenafly High School,

Tenafly, N. J. Hollis L. Caswell, curriculum expert at Teachers College, Columbia, says that "the report opens up an area of great importance and one to which increased attention should be given in the future." Price \$1 from the Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

To Read or Not to Read

MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT¹

CONSIDERING THE content of the comics, radio, moving pictures and children's books, the most casual observer is aware of some striking contrasts. The comics, radio, and movies have many qualities in common. They appeal both to adults and children and are therefore not expurgated or toned down to the level of juvenile books. In these three, excitement runs high, action is wild and incessant, adult themes are developed, adult emotions revealed and, thanks to pictures and sound, the adult language offers no problem to a child over eight. All this means that today's children are let in for more excitement, more closeups of the adult world than any generation of children ever encountered before. What it is doing to them we don't yet know. They have looked at war pictures which made adults sick. They endure suspense that is almost unbearable. They are used to news commentators with the voice of doom threatening dire catastrophes while the family says "Tcht, tcht!" and goes on with its dinner. Will this make today's children more avid of thrill, or more immune to emotion, or more callous and blasé? Will they read less and less? No one has answered these questions as yet. We have a few clues, but what they point to we are none too sure.

Children 3 to 6

Little children, three to six, seem to settle down to the old book favorites much as usual. Perhaps *Angus*, *Little Red Hen*, *Peter Rabbit*, and the others are a relief, familiar and comforting, after the violence of the adult world of radio, movies and comics. Teachers notice one difference. They say the children want more stories, more books, something new continually. We are not so sure about this report, however. Does this desire to push on to new books stem

¹Associate professor of education, Western Reserve University. This is the last of a series of four articles excerpted from the forthcoming book, *Children and Books* (Scott, Foresman).

from the children or from adults who grow tired of showing the same pictures and reading the same stories? Usually children like to mull over their favorites, hear them again and again until they too can say them. If this desire to hurry on to something new does come from over-stimulated children, perhaps we should deliberately slow them down. Tell and retell the classic tales. Read and show the choice picture-stories over and over. Say the nursery rhymes and a few lovely poems until the children have them. This is the way books should begin with children—slowly, lovingly, until they possess them forever. It will mean a smaller selection of old and new literature, a selection we hope of the best, because only the best is good enough to immunize our children against the vulgarity and violence to which they are going to be exposed.

Children 6 and 7

Children of six and seven are not reading any too well. What they do read is simple in content and style, and much of their literature is still being presented to them orally by the grownups. Again teachers note a few definite trends. Today's children are interested in the world of machinery and will pore over books of trains and airplanes by the hour. They want stories about real children of their own kind, not children of foreign lands, or children who talk with fairies, but just bread-and-butter youngsters in a recognizable environment. They like funny stories and they like animal tales, but the fairies can wait.

Is this new centering on realism the result of the adult entertainment children are sharing, or the unconscious emphasis of the adults at home and in school? Who can tell? However, these same children, who are known to spend their Saturdays sitting all afternoon in moving picture theaters witnessing heaven knows what in the way of adult dramas, return to their "Dick and Jane," or "Alice and Jerry" stories on Monday with every evidence of enjoyment. They brood over *Ping* as loyally as if they had never watched a G-Man bump off his victim: Andrewshek losing the

picnic basket absorbs them as happily as if they had never been treated to a close-up of tempestuous lovers. Perhaps such stories give them a sense of comforting familiarity. Here, in the story books, are things they can understand completely. They can enter into them with a sense of anticipation and certainty. Such literature helps them feel secure in a world of insecurity, gives them steadiness when they see and hear violence which is beyond their comprehension. Andrewshek loses his picnic basket, but good Auntie Katushka rescues it and the day is saved. Bartholomew Cubbins almost gets pushed off the parapet, but everything comes out all right and it's very funny. The comics, the radio, and the movies offer excitement, but frequently in an adult setting which is incomprehensible and disturbing. In his books the child finds a world he can understand, problems he can solve, conclusions he can anticipate. In his books he finds reassurance and gains confidence.

Children 8 to 9

In the next few years children eight or nine years old begin to read for themselves. They too, like the younger children, turn with curious adaptability from the adult subject matter of moving pictures, radio serials, and comics, to the simpler, more comprehensible stories for children. Perhaps they like plots which are a bit stouter, more red-blooded and violent than those children enjoyed a decade or so ago, but we not even sure of this. We do know, however, from the testimony of many classrooms, that this is the age when the interest in folk and fairy tales rises. "Superman" has not displaced "Hansel and Gretel," "Snow White," "East o' the Sun," *Pinocchio*. These they read and read again. They dramatize them, draw them, go to the movies to see them, and are as spellbound as if they had never pored over pictures of jet-bombs, or cringed before the horrors of ghouls and zombies. Along with their fairy tales, they demand stories about "real children," stories that "really could happen." They turn from this realism to fantasy as comfortably as they turn from adult programs to children's books. Up through the nine-year-old period then, there is still little difficulty in in-

teresting children in children's books of many varieties, if we know the field and make books available.

Children 10 to 14

It is approximately at the fifth grade level when reading begins to suffer increasingly from competition with moving pictures, radio, and comics. There are several reasons for this. First, this is the age when children's reading difficulties, if they have them, become acute, and are the bane of their lives. A ten or eleven-year-old who is a poor reader cannot read his geography or history textbooks, let alone a full sized story like *Young Fu* or *Caddie Woodlawn*. Reading is so hard for him that it is no fun. Moreover, his social interests and his appreciation of good stories lie years beyond the age appeal of most of the books he is able to read for himself. The easy reading he can manage he frequently scorns. He grows disgusted with books and turns to the comfortable solace of the movies. These give him a sense of reading power like that of the seven-year old who thought he could read *Anthony Adverse*. This sense of power may be a delusion but it must be intensely comforting after a child has tasted defeat and humiliation in his school reading. The comic strips, where he can follow his favorite characters through endless adventures, give him this same sense of reading power. Then we hand him a book, and he bites the dust once more, and probably his finger nails too. Of course he goes home, turns on the radio, hears the news, follows a rousing story, and his self respect is restored. Why should he struggle to read? Why should he bother with books?

For these slow readers, or readers with serious difficulties, we need a preventive program in the first place, a remedial program if necessary, but, above all, we need lots of books which are easy to read but whose content the child respects and enjoys. No book is good for a child if he does not like it. Nothing will keep him struggling to learn to read except intense satisfaction from the reading he is able to do. He must have exposure to enough of these good and easy books to gain a sense of fluency, of reading

power, without which he just won't struggle. Teachers need lists of books which are easy reading but still command the respect of older children. The C. W. Anderson horse stories are good examples. In the fields of biography, or a study of certain foreign lands, it is possible, over and over again, to supply children with books at three reading levels—taking care of your poorest readers and your children who are superior readers, as well as the average group. Even so, we need more easy reading for these retarded readers than is generally available, and more sequential practice in different types of reading for all children.

It is unfortunate that textbook Readers were out of style, for awhile, in the middle and upper grades. The results have been disastrous. Good Readers for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, with a sequential development in vocabularies and reading skills, and stories so arresting that even the best readers are absorbed by them, will not only do wonders for the poor readers but will develop in all the children a respect for reading. If these textbook stories have also a high literary quality, they will lift the level of the children's tastes even while they teach them to read and like it. Such Readers, today, are usually anthologies of good stories by good authors, and will do much to keep alive the faith that enjoyment is to be found not merely in the radio and the movies but in books as well.

The second problem that arises in this period of later childhood, pre-adolescence and adolescence, concerns not merely children who are poor readers, but all children. The problem lies in the discrepancy that apparently exists between the books literary adults think a child ought to read and the books he actually does read with honest enthusiasm. Librarians and teachers make impeccable book lists based on literary quality. Newbery Medals are bestowed each year upon the most distinguished book in the field of children's literature, and someone is always putting out lists of children's classics "Every child should know." But what happens? Many of the books most popular with children are not to be found on these lists,

while the children themselves fail to endorse with their voluntary patronage the carefully selected literary gems recommended by the adults experts. Why?

What Children Like to Read

Marie Rankin has made a careful study of *Children's Interests In Library Books of Fiction*² as evidenced by their unguided, voluntary withdrawal of fiction from some eight public libraries scattered from Brooklyn to Chicago. The ten most popular books with children from all these libraries are:

<i>Sue Barton, Senior Nurse</i>	Helen Boylston	Career story, girls
<i>The Good Master</i>	Kate Seredy	Story of a tomboy
<i>Caddie Woodlawn</i>	Carol Brink	Story of a tomboy
<i>Silver Chief to the Rescue</i>	Jack O'Brien	Dog hero
<i>Mountain Girl</i>	Genevieve Fox	Home, school, career
<i>The Jinx Ship</i>	Howard Pease	Sea adventure
<i>Silver Chief, Dog of the North</i>	Jack O'Brien	Dog hero
<i>Who Rides In the Dark?</i>	Stephen Meader	Historical mystery
<i>Peggy Covers the News</i>	Emma Bugbee	Career story, girls
<i>Sue Barton, Student Nurse</i>	Helen Boylston	Career story, girls

This study included adolescent as well as pre-adolescent children which helps explain the presence of four career books for girls and four adventure and mystery books for boys. In the latter group the two *Silver Chief* books are included because, while they have a dog hero, the atmosphere is masculine and the appeal is certainly as much male adventure as it is dog.

In this group of ten books, *Caddie Woodlawn* is the only Newbery Medal selection, while other Newbery books ranked in the least popular groups; namely *Dobry*, *Gay-Neck*, *The White Stag*, *The Cat Who Went To Heaven*, *The Trumpeter of Krakow* and *Waterless Mountain*. The book which is second in popularity, *The Good Master*, is not Kate Seredy's Newbery Award Book, but it

²Rankin, Marie. *Children's Interests in Library Books of Fiction*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1944.

is included on every good book list we know of for this age level. It is lively, well written, and has a strong child-appeal. The same is true of Stephen Meader's *Who Rides In the Dark?* The other books are not distinguished literature but they have certain virtues in common. In every case, the style is "lucid and dynamic."³ We should add that it is fast-moving, getting children into the story with the minimum descriptions and delay. The career stories are sincere and objective, with a sufficiently strong emotional tone to keep the girls deeply immersed in the heroines' problems. Here, in such books, little girls feel they are discovering life which is both real and earnest, life as they may wish to live it. The adventure tales for the boys are equally realistic and objective: an orphan boy making his way in the world, men fighting and sleuthing in the far North or at sea, and triumphing grandly. These satisfy a boy's hunger for achievement. Finally, these books all have clear-cut themes, exciting action plots, and they are mostly American and modern. The exceptions deviate only on the surface. As one boy said about *The Good Master*, "That Hungarian ranch is a lot like our Western ranches, and Janci seemed just like us. I sure would like to know Janci." So Mr. Meader's orphan, of the eighteenth century, and *Caddie*, of the Civil War period, are close kin to children today. These ten books also embody wholesome ideas and teach a courageous attack on difficulties.

With all of these virtues why are seven of the books not generally listed among our preferred juveniles, and why do such careful lists include the very books the children in this study liked least? To answer the first question briefly, the seven books not listed for literary distinction are all harmless enough, but some of them are frankly sensational and melodramatic; others are trite and obvious, either in style or content or both. They may not be poor books, but there are better books available. The second question concerning the conflict between children's tastes and adult standards of what makes good literature requires a longer answer.

³Rankin, Marie, *Children's Interests in Library Books of Fiction*, P. 60.

Why people should be surprised at this conflict is hard to understand since the same thing has always been true in the adult field. How many books rated by critics and colleges as great adult literature, would appear on a list of the ten most popular books as evidenced by adults' voluntary withdrawal of books from the library? Well, you know the answer. Would you expect to find Plato, Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Robert Browning, and Henry James holding their own with the last lurid best seller? Of course not. Does that mean, therefore, that we should abandon Browning and Jane Austen in favor of the current popular choices? Are colleges to give up their study of belles lettres and turn to the best seller lists for their courses? Hardly! To be sure, this analogy of classroom use of fine juvenile literature to a similar use of the classic belles lettres of adults is by no means perfect because children are not students of literature as such. Children are candidates for entertainment by way of books. But even in the field of entertainment, children can enjoy a far wider range of books, with a little guidance from adults, than they will ever discover when left to themselves. This is the heart of our problem.

Miss Rankin's study is tremendously important in showing us what children are looking for in books: brisk, objective style, clear cut themes, adventure; characters which are real children like themselves, or understandable people they might know anywhere; mystery, excitement, romance; stories which emphasize finding your place in the world, and give a sense of achievement. Of course these are desirable qualities in books for children, but does the study imply that the unpopular books on this list should be dropped, along with other book treasures not even mentioned in the study? Decidedly, not! Children know what books they like but not all the books they are capable of liking. Children know what they do not like in books: mystical ideas, tales about foreign lands, descriptions, dialect, books written in the first person, animal heroes other than dogs or horses, "sissy" characters, "queer" or "lofty" talk. Then, under the spell of certain books, they make exceptions to

everyone of their "hates," as children's librarians and teachers can testify. Our responsibility as adults is to know their likes and dislikes and then begin systematically to expose them to books which fulfill their needs but at the same time have more permanent significance than the comics or the mediocre books with which they may be perfectly satisfied if they never encounter anything better.

A little girl's idea of verse was limited to the momentary surprise and amusement of the limerick. Yet no child responded with greater delight to a variety of fine poetry than this child when she began to hear it. She developed a keen ear for the subtle music of lyric poetry. She read it continually, which in a child is rare, and she grew up with an extraordinary sensitivity to the varied forms and patterns of poetry. Yet she started with the smallest possible range, the nonsense limerick. Two brothers were both bright and good readers, but one of them never voluntarily read anything, and the other read every detective story and detective magazine available. Neither of these boys had encountered any of the major books on every list of good literature for children. Theirs was a rural school, with dreary old Readers of a poor variety to begin with, and no library books to supplement them. The county library would have supplied the books if the teacher had known what to order. When she was given some help and the beautiful modern editions of children's books began to appear in the classroom, reading soared in popularity. The big children read not only their own books, but the amusing picture-stories for the youngest children. *Ferdinand and Ping, Lentil, Make Way For the Ducklings, Mike Mulligan*, were common property. *The Good Master, Shadow In the Pines, Smoky, All-American* and *Tom Sawyer* started many a non-reader to reading and made a convert of the boy who was the detective story addict. If children are going to read worthwhile books they must be accessible. Not many families are buying two and three dollar books for children, so the libraries and the schools have the task of getting the better books into the children's hands somehow. This is the first kind of reading guidance for which adults are

responsible—seeing that all children are exposed to some of the best books at approximately the right age.

Even with such exposure not every child is going to like every good book offered him. Taste in books differs almost as radically as taste in music, or food, or anything else. If a child never develops a liking for one of the best books, just put it away, without regret, and try him with another fine book of another type. At least he had a chance at it. He has met *Alice in Wonderland*, he knows what it is about. If he doesn't like it, then he doesn't, but the chance to sample it and to accept or reject it is important to a child if he is to develop into an intelligent reader.

Quick and Slow Appeal of Books

There is another thing we need to remember about books. Like popular music some books make an instantaneous appeal. Among such books are many exceedingly fine ones while others of quick appeal are merely slick and trivial. Adults read plenty of this sort of trash; so they should not be surprised to find children also amused momentarily by the mediocre. It probably won't harm them. The worst thing it does is to waste their time and perhaps lessen their taste for better reading. Generally such stories are quickly read and quickly forgotten.

There are other books whose appeal is slow, and children sometimes have to be helped to the enjoyment of these by adults. All poetry, for instance, beyond the lightest of light verse, has to be heard over and over again, by the average child, before it is genuinely enjoyed. Children who have the good fortune to hear adults read poetry aloud with unaffected vigor and enjoyment always like it while other children, not so fortunate, say they don't like it. To abandon all attempts to use any poetry with children except nonsense verse, just because they think they don't like any other variety is as absurd as if we should give up trying any music with them except the popular songs they pick up from the latest radio or movie favorite. Popular songs and doggerel verse are learned today and forgotten tomorrow. Great music and fine poetry may

take longer to appreciate, but they stay with us and their significance grows.

If, then, we are to bridge the gap between the kind of reading the child may pick out for himself and the kind of books we should like him to enjoy, we shall need both time and patience for the slow cultivation of certain choice, but not easy, books. Perhaps we shall have to read some of them aloud to the children, giving them time to mull over them, talk about them, and savor their uniqueness at a leisurely pace. We'll use no check ups, give no tests, ask for nothing except possible enjoyment. Probably the average child would never read *Wind In the Willows* for himself, or choose it at random from the library shelves. Are we therefore to drop *Wind In the Willows* and dwell only on the child's favorite career stories? Many children would certainly never read *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*, or *Dobry*, and, with the great influx of new books each year, *Robin Hood* might easily be overlooked. Yet we are sure that every child should encounter these books before he finishes elementary school. We don't ask that every child should like every one of them, even half way well. All we ask is that he shall meet these books, have a good look at them, hear an adult or other children, who really enjoy them, talk about them, compare notes and laugh over favorite parts, as all good book lovers have always done since time immemorial. Then if a child says in effect, "Not for me!" that's all right. He has heard us, and we'll listen next to one of his favorites.

Great music and great literature are not easy for everyone and never have been. That is no reason why we should confine our offering entirely to the instantly enjoyed. Children's tastes grow, their appreciation develops upon what it is fed. Of course a book that bores the children is not good literature for those children, even if it is a classic. But if unmusical children can go to the great orchestras and learn gradually to revel in the greatest music; so we can expose children to fine books and cultivate gradually a taste for better reading than the average child would ever discover for

himself. We can read aloud snatches from our favorites, both prose and poetry. Relate certain episodes, or better still, get some child to do so. Never ask, "Did you like that book?" If the child did, he'll tell you. If he didn't, giving you a docile "Yes," won't help either you or the book in his estimation. When you expose him to the best, it must be a comfortable experience without any sense of pressure.

When researches tell us that certain distinguished juvenile books are not voluntarily read by children, let's remember, then, what most adults are reading voluntarily, and not be too discouraged about the children. If people imply that we had better drop some of these distinguished, but infrequently read books, in favor of the children's undistinguished but popular choices, let's think twice. If American children are now enjoying finer music than ever before, it is only because infinite pains have gone into the development of their taste. They heard the great symphonies in small doses, with carefully prepared introductions. So we need to prepare and present some of the more difficult and choice books for children, books which they cannot readily enjoy without some adult guidance. Perhaps it would be better if we substituted adult "companionship" for "guidance." Let's make school reading a slow, happy sharing of a rich experience.

Finally, if we are going to meet the competition of moving pictures, radio serials, and comics, with books, we must find many that are easy to read, with clear cut themes and plenty of exciting action. We must find books which help the child understand his own world today, and sometimes books that help him escape from today, by going back to times that were simpler and more understandable. We must find stories as realistic and homely as a loaf of bread, and others as fantastic as a mirage. Above all, to balance the speed and confusions of our modern world, we need to find books which build strength and steadfastness in the child, books which develop his faith in the essential decency and nobility of life, books which give him a feeling for the wonder and beauty of God's universe.

Look and Listen

Edited by LILLIAN NOVOTNY¹

Radio

From Ruth M. Foltz, Coordinator of Elementary Programs, WBOE, Cleveland Public Schools, comes news of an enthusiastic response to a new series of programs in the field of elementary language arts: "The Treasure Chest of Poetry," a series planned to stimulate an interest in and develop the appreciation of good poetry. Mr. Edwin F. Helman, senior high program coordinator at Station WBOE, is the reader. Miss Foltz reports: "The response to the series, begun in September of this year, has been most enthusiastic. Librarians report an amazing demand for poetry books by the children. We have had a request for a similar series for primary levels. So many splendid pupil illustrations of the poems presented have been sent in by teachers that we are planning an exhibit of creative work growing out of the utilization of these programs. Creative poetry too, is being received. We plan to use the best of these on our final program for the semester."

Congratulations go to Mrs. Ruth Weir Miller, formerly first Radio Assistant of the Philadelphia Public Schools, who has recently been appointed Assistant Educational Direc-

tor of WCAU. Mrs. Miller is a co-author with Alfred Dunham, Chief of Radio Services, U. S. Department of Education of "Utilizing Radio in the Schools," which will be released in the fall.

Philadelphia Public Schools report that today 126,000 children listen regularly to school broadcasts. 86 per cent of the schools in Philadelphia are using radio.

The U. N. budget, adopted last December, contained an item of \$794,000 for its general radio operations. That sum is more than three times the approximately \$250,000 which the U. N. spent for radio in 1946.

Films

Has the Children's Film Library project been organized in your community? The Motion Picture Association of America, Inc., calls attention to the need of community support if the project is to succeed. The comment of one exhibitor is indicative of one aspect of the problem: "We have to think up a lot of special inducements to arouse interest

¹Miss Novotny, a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, is a member of the Council's Committee on Radio and Photoplay, and was formerly a member of the Chicago Radio Council.

in these special shows. Children like to see adult pictures. They want to see the newest releases. They seem to have an aversion to pictures classified as juvenile entertainment, but when we can entice them in with contests of one kind or another they seem pleased." Mr. Hunt of Riverside said: "We have what we call the 'Hi Ho Show' for the younger children. It's been going for some time and works pretty well, but we don't have as much support from the parents as we'd like to have." At warner's Beverly Theatre, Mr. Rosen gave an enthusiastic report of his experiment with the Children's Library. His theatre has organized a Bugs Bunny Club, giving each child a membership card. Each week, a big birthday cake is cut with great ceremony in honor of those who are celebrating the beginning of a new year. The voice of Bugs Bunny from the sound track calls the audience to attention, and leads the children in the singing of the Star Spangled Banner. Assorted cartoons and sports subjects are shown as fillers for the Saturday morning show, which lasts from ten to twelve.

Interesting, too, is the report from many sources that children particularly enjoy straight runs of from twelve to fifteen cartoons best of all. The question is raised as to whether that is a reflection of their unfailing

interest in comic strips. One theatre man explains it by saying, "Children like a change of pace. They like swift movement and the new characters, or the familiar old ones involved in new adventures."

The choice of pictures for the Children's Library is a difficult one. It is urged that suitable films from current releases be interspersed whenever possible. A few of the thirty-two 1946 films recommended by the National Parent-Teachers Magazine for Junior matiness as listed in the January 1947 issue include: *Bad Bascomb*, *Black Beauty*, *Up Goes Maisie*, *The Bandit of Sherwood Forests*, *My Brother Talks to Horses*, *Disney's Song of the South* and *Make Mine Music*, *Three Wise Fools*, *The Virginian*, *Wild Beauty*, *Margie*, and *The Return of Rusty*.

For further information concerning this project, write to Department of Studio and Public Service, Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. 5504 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood 28, California.

A retired teacher who has been tutoring a child in remedial reading reports a considerable degree of success in stimulating reading interest through the use of photoplay guides, available through Educational and Recreational Guides, Inc., 172

Renner Avenue, Newark 8, New Jersey. These aids, as you know, include a sheet of stills from the movie, together with a discussion guide, and may be ordered at 10c a copy or 20 for \$1.00. A special elementary assortment includes: Anne of Green Gables, Captain Courageous, Edison the Man, Robin Hood, Tom Sawyer Detective, The Wizard of Oz, Twenty-Three and a Half Hours' Leave, Pinocchio, Snow White, Treasure Island, David Copperfield, Union Pacific. The twelve illustrated booklets which regularly cost \$1.20, are available for \$1.00.

Recordings

Americans All—Immigrants All, a series of 24 recorded programs presenting the story of the contributions made by those who have immigrated to this country to the social, economic, and political development of the United States is available through the Federal Radio Education Committee, U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, Washington 25, D. C.

The series is available in either the 12-inch double-face phonograph record (which requires a turntable which revolves at 33 1/3 r.p.m.) is priced at \$3.75 per program; and the 12-inch double-face phonograph record (78 r.p.m.) is priced at \$4.75

per program. A copy of a teacher's handbook and manual is supplied with each order. Copies of the scripts are also available on free loan.

The American Library Association, 520 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11, Illinois, has the following recordings available: "Sleeping Beauty," "Baldur," "Gudbrand-on-the-Hillside," and "Tales from the Volsung Saga" (two records.) The set consists of five 12-inch records (ten sides, four minutes per side) at 78 r.p.m. The cost of the set is \$10. Prepaid.

These recordings, narrated by Mrs. Gudrun Thorne - Thomsen without background music or sound effects, should interest children in the elementary and junior high school, particularly if the more advanced groups are studying Scandinavian literature.

The Radio Corporation of America, RCA Victor Division, Camden, New Jersey, has announced a new basic record library for elementary schools consisting of 21 albums, all newly recorded and accompanied by extensive teaching notes. The record library (list price of \$98.75) incorporates a basic music appreciation program which may be supplemented and extended by the addition of other available records. Outstanding recording artists were engaged to make

these albums, and instrumental music was performed by the RCA Victor Orchestra, composed of members of the NBC Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Further information may be obtained by writing to the above address.

Publications and Teaching Aids

Air-Age Education Research, 80 East 42nd Street, New York 17, New York, offers a new 1947 *Catalog*. Twenty-four fully illustrated pages list free and inexpensive teaching aids and services for air age education, and include: maps, globes, charts, textbooklets, motion pictures, and lithographs. Free.

Miss Eleanor Judge, kindergarten instructor in the Seward Elementary School, Chicago, has given a most enthusiastic report on the results obtained in reading readiness through the use of the *Kindergraph Kit*. Principal Daniel Magner states that although results of the reading readiness testing (given before the pupils enter first grade) have not been verified through the use of control groups, the pupils who used this material during the past semester have made consistently higher scores than any previous kindergarten group.

The kit consists of a small stage together with definite stage sets of movable scenery and many individual, colorful cardboard characters—animals, nursery rhyme characters, birds, vegetables, forms, and shapes. Slits, carefully marked and cut, permit movement of these forms across the stage.

Following the plan set up in the booklet of instructions which accompanies the kit, the children gain valuable experience in purposeful speaking; develop the meaning of difficult words, such as *over*, *beside*, *before*, *upon*, *near*, *far*, *into*; increase the ability to distinguish, identify, and remember visual forms and figures; develop eye-movement habits of left-to-right sequence; acquaint them with nursery rhymes; develop the ability to count accurately from one to ten; become acquainted with vegetables that grow above and in the ground; become acquainted with various means of transportation; learn the simple terms of various forms, such as square, triangle, star, crescent, cone, etc.; and to appreciate the many people—farmer, grocer, doctor, nurse, milkman, policeman—who contribute to their daily needs.

Individual workbooks accompany the material, and the children in this group were so enthusiastic that they insisted on using it daily.

For further information, write to Miss Kilcullen, Chicago Education Bureau, 8 South Dearborn Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.

Equipment

De Luxe Transcription Player has been engineered closely to standards originally set up by the Radio Council of the Chicago Public Schools, and has been tried out in schools, industry, and radio stations. The machine is portable and weighs 33 pounds. A particularly fine feature is its dual-speed motor— $33\frac{1}{3}$ and 78 r.p.m.—which plays both standard phonograph records (10 and 12 inch) and transcriptions (16 inch) on its ten-inch turn table. It is a five-tube machine with an eight-inch permanent magnet dynamic speaker, and has space provided in the sturdy case for carrying transcriptions. The price is \$150. net and delivery is guaranteed within 30 days. Orders should be addressed to the School Broadcast Conference, 228 N. La Salle Street, Chicago 1, Illinois.

Panacoustic Transcription Player, designed and built for broadcasting stations and advertising agencies, is recommended for classroom use as well. This machine, too, plays both ten and twelve inch records (78 r.p.m.) and 16 inch records ($3\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m.), on a Garrard 12 inch turn-

table and motor. An RCA Accordion speaker is mounted in the lid of the case. Weight is 45 pounds. The price is \$200. Orders should be addressed to the U.S. Recording Co., 1121 Vermont Avenue, Washington 5, D.C.

Michelson Porto-playback has been announced back on the market with many improvements guaranteed to meet the needs of radio stations, advertising agencies, transcription companies, and schools. Equipped with a dual speed motor which permits playing 10-12 inch recordings at 78 r.p.m., as well as 16 inch transcriptions at $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m., it weighs only 26 pounds. The case is sturdy and water-repellent. The price is \$125. Orders should be addressed to Charles Michelson, Inc., 67 West 44th Street, New York City 18.

Rembrandt Portable Electric Phonograph is described as a new machine designed particularly for school use. With a standard 78 r.p.m. motor, it plays 10 and 12 inch records. A built-in compartment holds 12 records. Equipped with a five inch built-in permanent magnet speaker, it has independent tone and volume controls and an indicator light. The price is \$52.85. Orders should be addressed to The Popular Science Publishing Company, 353 Fourth Ave., New York 10, New York.

The Educational Scene

The committee to nominate officers of the National Council of Teachers of English to serve for one year, beginning at the close of the Annual Meeting next November are: Harold A. Anderson, Chairman, John J. DeBoer, Max J. Herzberg, Irvin C. Poley, Marion C. Sheridan. Their nominations, which appear below, may be supplemented by others made by petition of twenty members of the Board of Directors of the Council, accompanied by written consent of the nominees. The Council constitution also provides for nomination from the floor of the Board of Directors when it proceeds to the election at its last session in connection with the convention of next Thanksgiving. The slate is as follows:

For President: Thomas C. Pollock, New York University.

For First Vice-President: Marion C. Sheridan, New Haven (Conn.) High School

For Second Vice-President: Lucia B. Mirrieles, Montana State University

For Secretary-Treasurer: W. Wilbur Hatfield, Chicago Teachers College

For Directors-at-large (six to be elected)

Bernice Dahl, Lincoln High School, Seattle, Washington

Inez Frost, Hutchinson (Kansas) Junior College

George E. Murphy, University of Delaware

Charlemae Rollins, Chicago Public Library, Hall Branch

Myrtle A. Schwan, Salt Lake City (Utah) Public Schools

Ollie Stratton, Brackenridge High School, San Antonio, Texas

Reports on progress in research in English were presented by Mildred Dawson, J. C. Seegers, H. A. Greene, Philip Falk, Nila B. Smith, Gertrude Whipple, Elizabeth Gunn, and G. M. Yoakam, at a breakfast meeting of the National Conference on Research in English at Atlantic City, March 3, 1947. Officers elected for the current year are: President, Dr. Bernice Leary; Vice-President, Dr. Gerald Yoakam; Member-at-Large for the Executive Committee, Dr. Bess Goodykoontz. The new Secretary-Treasurer is Dr. Mildred Dawson, F. A. Owen Publishing Company, Dansville, N. Y.

The Reading Clinic staff of the Department of Psychology of Temple University will again sponsor an An-

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nual Institute on Developmental Reading during the week of June 23 to June 27. The program will include seminars, demonstrations, and evaluations by well-known specialists in reading and related fields. Enrollment is limited by advance registration, confirmed prior to the Institute. Information may be secured from Dr. Emmett A. Betts, Director of Reading Clinic, Temple University, Philadelphia 22, Pa.

The *New York Herald Tribune* Spring Book Festival takes place May 12-17. A color poster is free on request to schools and libraries from the *New York Herald Tribune*, 230 West 41st Street, New York, N. Y.—Religious Book Week, sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, is scheduled for May 4-11. Limited quantities of poster, book marks, pamphlets, radio scripts, and editorials are available free from the National Conference—The Newbery and Caldecott Awards will be announced during the annual convention of the American Library Association to be held at San Francisco June 30 to July 6. —The Child Study Association recently presented its annual award to Howard Pease for his book *Heart of Danger* in recognition of his work in "presenting with honesty and courage a realistic pic-

ture of today's world."—Among literary birthdays to be observed soon are Emerson, May 25; Walt Whitman, May 31; and Harriet Beecher Stowe, June 14—The Council Against Intolerance in America, 17 East 42nd Street, New York 17, will loan its exhibits on the Negro in American Life and the Jew in American Life without cost except for express cost and handling fee. Each of these exhibits contains about twenty-five panels, 20 inches by 30 inches and 27 inches by 40 inches in size—Sets of twelve Soviet children's books with explanatory cards and summaries may be rented from the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, 114 East 32nd Street, New York 16, for a rental fee of \$2.50 a week—The slogan for this year's Book Week, which will be celebrated November 16-22, is "Books for the World of Tomorrow."

A list of aids entitled *Book Selection for Children and Young People* is available free from the American Library Association, 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago—The American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York 24, will send free its catalog of popular scientific publications of the museum entitled *Man and Nature*.

The magazine *Pbylon* is a pub-

lication of Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia. It contains profile studies of eminent personalities, an interesting feature on Negro folklore, stories by such established writers as Langston Hughes, and book reviews. It is available four times a year from Atlanta University at an annual subscription rate of \$2.00.

The March 1947 issue of the magazine *Education* is devoted to the teaching of reading. Among the contributors to this issue are Emmett A. Betts, J. Conrad Seegers, Helen M. Robinson, E. W. Dolch, Grace M. Fernald, and others.

The Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of May, 1947: for boys and girls 6, 7, and 8 years of age, *For a Child*, collected by Wilma McFarland, Westminster Press, \$2.50; for boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age; *Lucky Orphan*, by Ida Cecil Moore, Charles Scribner's Sons, \$2.00; for older girls, 12 to 16 years of age, *Spurs for Suzanna*, by Betty Cavanna, Westminster Press, \$2.00; and for older boys, 12 to 16 years of age, *The Golden Stallion*, by Theodore J. Waldeck, Viking, \$2.00.

The Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of June, 1947: for boys and girls 6, 7, and 8 years of age, *Too Many Kittens*, by Helen Hoke, David McKay, \$2.00; for boys

and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age, *Pancakes—Paris*, by Claire Huchet Bishop, Viking, \$2.00; for older girls, 12 to 16 years of age, *Ann Lawrence of Old New York*, by Gladys Malvern, Julian Messner, \$2.50; and for older boys, 12 to 16 years of age, *The Twenty-One Balloons*, by William Pene du Bois, Viking, \$2.50.

The Canada-United States Committee on Education wishes to call the attention of teachers in the United States to opportunities for summer study in Canada. For a list of institutions offering courses address Charles E. Phillips, Co-Secretary, Canada-United States Committee on Education, 677 Dundas St., W., Toronto 2B, Ontario.

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues proposes the following six-point program:

1. The real danger of the atomic bomb—the possibility of another war—must be made clear to all of our people.
2. Serious and intelligent action must be taken to advance international friendship.
3. International control of atomic energy must be established.
4. We must stop making atomic bombs immediately.
5. An effective civilian control of atomic energy must be instituted in our country at once.

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6. The possible benefits of atomic energy must be emphasized and developed.

Said at Atlantic City AASA Meeting:

"It would seem we Americans should now have learned to take seriously the adage about the ounce of prevention—if only on a dollars-and-cents basis. There are those of us who believe that education, and the cultivation of understanding among peoples, offer the big chance for prevention. Yet the amounts our nation spends for domestic education are declining, relative to the economy; and the amounts we spend to promote international understanding are a pittance compared with the need, with the opportunity and with the alternatives"—The Honorable William Benton, Assistant Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

"While public education should be divorced from politics in the partisan, narrow sense of the term, public education can never be divorced from the needs, wants, and wishes of the people it serves."—The Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey, Mayor of Minneapolis, Minn.

"The crux of the problem today and in the foreseeable future is Soviet-American understanding. To be sure, it is important for us to know far better than we do the peoples of

Britain, France, China, India, Brazil, and many other countries. But we might neglect any one of these without inviting disaster. Of the seven or eight so-called 'great powers' that dominated the earth in the early years of this century only two remain—Russia and the United States. These two giants tower over the other nations of the earth as great mountain peaks tower over the surrounding foothills. The peace of the world literally hangs on the relations between these two countries. Without friendly collaboration, or at least mutual tolerance, the United Nations and the hope of peace will be wrecked. In view of the nature of atomic war these are the highest stakes for which men have ever played. We must make sure that we play our cards well."—George S. Counts, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

Pi Lambda Theta, National Association for Women in Education, announces two awards of \$400 each for research on professional problems of women from the Ella Victoria Dobbs Fellowship Fund, to be granted on or before August 15, 1947, for significant research studies in education. An unpublished study may be submitted on any aspect of the professional problems and contributions of women, *either in education or in*

some other field. Among others, studies of women's status, professional training, responsibilities and contributions to education and to society, both in this country and abroad, will be acceptable. No study granted an award shall become the property of Pi Lambda Theta, nor shall Pi Lambda Theta in any way restrict the subsequent publication of a study for which an award is granted, except that Pi Lambda Theta shall have the privilege of inserting an introductory statement in the printed form of any study for which an award is made. A study may be submitted by an individual, whether or not engaged at present in educational work, or by any chapter or group of members of Pi Lambda Theta. Three copies of the final report of the completed research study shall be submitted to the Committee on Studies and Awards by July 1, 1947. Information concerning the awards and the form in which the final report shall be prepared will be furnished upon request. All inquiries should be addressed to the chairman of the Committee on Studies and Awards, Miss Bess Goodykoontz, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

A booklet of original poetry entitled *God's Children* was written and printed by a group of boys, aged ten to fourteen, at Allendale Farm school. These poems express the feelings of the boys about the Negro and were written immediately after they had been read a collection of the poems of Langston Hughes. Any teacher interested in the creative writing of children would enjoy reading these poems.

The price of the booklet, which can be secured by writing directly to Allendale School Press, Lake Villa, Illinois is twenty-five cents.

The Pennsylvania State College announces its annual Conference on Reading Instruction for June 23 to June 27, 1947. The theme of the Conference will be "Creating a School-wide Reading Program." Speakers will include Guy L. Bond, John J. DeBoer, Bertha Handlan, Eason Monroe, Leversia L. Powers, Willis E. Pratt, Marion R. Trabue, and Paul Whitty. Information about the Conference may be secured from Dr. Eason Monroe, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Penn.

Review and Criticism

[Reviews and annotations in this issue are by E. W. Dolch, Charlemagne Rollins, Jean Gardiner Smith, Kathryn E. Hodapp, Hannah M. Lindahl, Dorothy E. Smith, Audrey F. Carpenter, La Tourette Stockwell, Mary E. Kier, Ivah Green and Helen R. Sattley. Unsigned reviews are by the editor.]

For the Teacher

Improving Reading in Content Fields.

Edited by W. S. Gray. University of Chicago Press, 1947. \$2.00.

When one reads a book by fifty authors, one naturally expects a great variety in material and in point of view. In the volume under review, fifty authors, all speakers at the Annual Reading Conference held at the University of Chicago, teachers, supervisors, administrators, college professors, editors, and other specialists, are represented by an average of four pages each. The contributors are drawn from elementary education, as well as the high school areas of literature, mathematics, science, and social studies. They prove themselves not only "subject matter specialists," but also educators, in the sense that they see the growth problems of their students, particu-

larly as influenced by skill in use of books and reading.

Attention is given also to primary and middle grade work. Here the various authors necessarily deal with the fundamentals of reading instruction. These fundamentals, we find, are interest and background, plus pupil reaction. It appears, therefore, that the usual separation between early stages of reading and the later ones is largely an artificial one. There are always interest and background and reaction, and there is always content and assimilation of content. This brings up the much neglected question of what difference there actually is or should be between handling of content at different levels of child development.

The Director of the Conference plans each year a different emphasis, trying at all times to sense the needs or demands or interests in regard to reading of those interested throughout the country. (The Conference takes pride in drawing attendance from all of the 48 states). A previous conference dealt with "mechanics," when it was felt that everywhere people were saying, "Too many children cannot read." The present conference swung to the side of con-

tent. Doubtless there will be a return swing since all of the problems of reading are with us all of the time.

The method of planning these conferences has distinct merits, but at the same time has certain disadvantages for contributors. The main topic is divided into subtopics or subsubtopics, each assigned to a speaker. As a result, the whole has coherence and cumulative effect. But at the same time many contributors are put on somewhat artificial ground. This poses the common problem, "Should a speaker tell us what is closest to his heart or should he treat an assigned subject?" As one reads the fifty-odd contributions, he sometimes feels that the writer speaks from the heart and sometimes that he speaks only from the head. In fact, the writer sometimes seems to be rather laboriously carrying out an assignment. In such a case, the reader can very readily pass on to the next contribution. There are enough splendid presentations of live ideas to justify careful study of this volume by all workers in the field.

E. W. D.

Writing for Children. By Erick Berry and Herbert Best. Illustrated by Erick Berry. Viking, \$2.50.

If you are looking for a book to help you write a juvenile, here it

is. This husband and wife team, having been very successful in the field themselves, pass on to you some "tricks of the trade." They discuss plot, characters, presentation, locale, opening paragraphs, dialogue, even tools and office hours. They can't give you gusts of inspiration, those which come from knowing, loving and feeling your subject—and they would be the first to acknowledge this—but they can give you the benefit of their varied experiences and so save you much time, energy and discouragement.

H. R. S.

For Early Adolescents

The Young Barbarians. By Helen R. Sattley. Morrow Junior Books, \$2.00.

Just when high school life seemed about perfect for sixteen-year-old Barbara Hiatt, her father brought home a lovely young step-mother.

Barbara and her crowd were doing all the things most teen agers are criticized for doing; they dressed carelessly in sloppy sweaters and dirty shoes; they held endless telephone conversations; they were loud and thoughtless, with no respect for furniture or property; in short, they were just what the adults called them—"The Young Barbarians."

Instead of complicating life for Barbara, her stepmother helped her

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to iron out some of her difficulties, and together they learned to understand and respect each other. The other members of the crowd, with the help of a sympathetic teacher and some interested parents, find a solution to boredom and excess energy.

In this story, older girls will find the answers to their questions about such adolescent problems as kissing, petting, steady dating, and drinking. They will like the story too. C. R.

The Golden Stallion. By Theodore J. Waldeck. Illustrated by Wesley Dennis. Viking, \$2.00.

For less mature readers than of *Thunderhead*, the book tells of a stallion who is captured, tamed, saves the life of a young boy, and is returned to the herd of wild horses. A welcome addition to horse stories. It will be useful for slow readers in the upper grades. Grades 6-10.

J. G. S.

Summer under Sail. By Elizabeth Howard. William Morrow, \$2.00.

Clarissa Meade had long wanted to sail with her grandfather on his schooner, *Samantha*, but this was unheard of in the year 1852. Clarissa's flagrant disobedience in attending a lecture on woman's rights so shocked her parents that they permitted her to go. Grandpa managed that Nathaniel Judson should also

sail to learn navigation. Adventure came thick and fast on the *Samantha* and when Clarissa returned to Cleveland her disobedience if forgotten. The hint of romance will appeal to older girls.

K. E. H.

John of America. By Loring MacKay. Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. Longmans, Green, \$2.50.

Adolescent boys and girls will find this vigorous tale of John Barebody's experiences in the New World a colorful and swiftly-moving story.

When John's foster mother was accused of witchcraft and his own life was endangered, he fled to America. The five years which he spent as bond-servant in Virginia were characterized not only by hard work but also by dreams and ambitions. But there were fears too—fears of the fury of witch-hunters. Dramatically the story moves forward to an ending that brings to John a happy discovery of his identity and a quelling of his fears.

H. M. L.

Bright Horizons. By Anne Emery. Illustrated by Raymond Vartanian. G. P. Putnam's Sons, \$2.50.

Boston just after the Revolutionary War provides the setting for this adventure story. Timothy Swain, apprenticed to Thomas Latimer, gets into difficulties while searching for his father, a sea captain for an unscrupulous merchant, Ezra Cobb. With the aid of Paul Revere and Mr.

Latimer, Timothy's father is finally found and Ezra Cobb discredited. Timothy and his father look forward to brighter horizons for themselves and their beloved nation. Grades 7-9.

K. E. H.

For the Middle Years

A Pocketful of Rhymes. Edited by Katherine Love. Illustrated by Henrietta Jones. Crowell, \$1.75.

A charming collection of poetry. Although the poems are for the delight of children, they are also of a quality which makes them worth reading and remembering. Grades 4-7 and for reading aloud to all ages.

J. G. S.

Jasper the Drummin' Boy. Written and illustrated by Margaret Taylor. Viking, \$1.50.

Jasper's mother wanted him to be a concert pianist, but Jasper wanted to be a drummer and drummed on everything, on the fence, on the porch, on the church pew and in school. Jasper and his friends made their own instruments and played on a street corner. Stomp King, a famous band leader, heard them and persuaded Jasper's parents that he had rare drumming ability. That Jasper is a colored boy is learned only from the unusual line drawings.

K. E. H.

The Bible Story of Creation. By Mary Alice Jones. Illustrated by Janice Holland. Rand, McNally. \$1.25.

This is a reverent interpretation of the story of creation as recorded in Genesis, devoid of dogmatic or religious bias. Without saying so directly, Miss Jones recognizes the work of contemporary physicists and chemists. She gives man credit for being able to think and to interpret.

The illustration on every page in lovely color enhance the value of the book. Sturdily bound in cloth, it is one which should wear well in more ways than one. D. E. S.

Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle. By Betty MacDonald. Illustrated by Richard Bennett. J. P. Lippincott, \$2.00.

Betty "the Egg and I" MacDonald's book about the wonderful Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle will appeal to parents as well as to children. Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, who lived in an upside-down house with her dog and cat, loved children and knew how to cure them of bad habits. Parents with obstreperous children will long to meet a real Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle who could help them deal with problem children in such an efficient but rather unorthodox manner. K. E. H.

Rhymes and Verses: Collected Poems for Children. By Walter De La Mare. With drawings by Elinore Blaisdell. Holt, \$3.00.

An attractive collection drawn from other books by De La Mare. The poems are divided into general

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subjects such as the city, the town, books, winter and Christmas, night and dreams. Indexed both by first line and by title. Grades 5-9. J. G. S.

Easter Surprise. By Helen Rathbun. Illustrated by Vera Neville. Crowell.

A slight story about a little girl who planted six tulip bulbs in the fall as a surprise for her mother. She waited and watched impatiently until they finally bloomed in the spring just in time for Easter. The sustained interest seems a little forced, but the story is quietly pleasant.

Grades 3-5. J. G. S.

Nellie and the Mayor's Hat. By Charlotte Baker. Illustrated by the author. Coward-McCann.

The companion story to *Necessary Nellie* is a much better piece of writing. The conversation is natural and amusing. Now that Nellie has produced a family, her Mexican friends have the problem of finding a home for the five puppies. Since a home is investigated carefully before being allowed to adopt a baby, the children decide the same care should be taken before placing the dogs. After investigating their teacher who lived in an apartment, their aunt who had four children, the filling station man, and the mayor, they came to the conclusion that the mayor was the right person, but

they couldn't convince him that he was! It took Nellie to do that in her own way. Third, fourth, and fifth grade children will be delighted by this new story about Nellie who has a real personality. A. F. C.

Dot for Short. By Frieda Friedman. Illustrated by Carolyn Haywood. William Morrow, \$2.00.

Although Dot lived in New York City, she was part of a family you may find anywhere, the kind that doesn't have too much money, but is rich in understanding and love. Her special cross to bear was her shortness, and her biggest ambition to be next to the tallest girl in her room at school.

Dot's whole family was proud of her when she recited before the parents at a school entertainment, even though she did have to sneeze in the middle of her speech; and when her limerick won a thousand dollar prize in a contest they had such a happy day they never forgot it. Fourth and fifth grade children will find this story good reading, and will enjoy the print and spacing which make the pages go quickly. A. F. C.

Story Treasures. By W. W. Theisen and Guy L. Bond. Pictures by George M. Richards. Macmillan, \$1.40.

This is the sixth-grade reader in the series, *Living Literature for Sup-*

plementary Reading. The eight units in the book contain selections which will satisfy a variety of interest. Included in the units are stories of adventure, humorous selections, stories of the early history of our country, strange tales, and hero stories. One noteworthy feature of the book is the list of questions at the end of each selection. They are intended for use in promoting group discussion. The questions will also serve to improve the children's ability to comprehend and to interpret what they read. Another helpful feature is the list of suggestions for the additional reading of books relating to the material in the units. H. M. L.

Tom Edison: Boy Inventor. By Sue Gutheridge. Illustrated by Betty Graham. Bobbs, Merrill.

The ubiquitous advertising man has tried to make everyone aware of the fact that Thomas Alvh Edison would have been one hundred years old in 1947. Taking advantage of this publicity, this biography tells of the inventor's boyhood in Ohio and Michigan, of his laboratories at home and on the Grand Trunk trains where he sold newspapers and candy.

Printed in large type, and written in a fifth-grade vocabulary, the book is obviously designed for the elementary school level. Facts are here, but somehow Tom Edison doesn't come alive. D. E. S.

Wings Of The Morning. Edited by Jane Werner. Illustrated by Decie Merwin. Grosses, 50c.

These are thirty-seven isolated texts from the Old and New Testaments. Texts outside of their context are likely to be inconvincing and confusing. These are no exception. The illustrations make an effort to be childlike in their imagination. The general effect is that it is a gift book for the undiscriminating. It is difficult to disassociate it from the jingle of the cash register. D. E. S.

Tales of Momolu. By Lorenz Graham. Illustrations by Letterio Calapai. Reynal and Hitchcock, \$2.50.

A simply told but very vivid group of stories about the daily life and adventures of an African boy who knows almost nothing about western civilization. The author is an American who spent some time in Liberia as a missionary. He originally composed these tales about Momolu for his own five children to help them understand the youngsters of Liberia. Although designed for ages 8 and up, the combined simplicity and beauty of these stories gives them an ageless quality which should attract both younger and perhaps even adult readers. Its feeling and style are similar to that of Eleanor Dark's *The Timeless Land.* L. T. S.

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The Cow-Tail Switch. By Harold Courlander and George Herzog. Illustrations by Madye Lee Chastain. Henry Holt, \$2.50.

A distinguished collection of West African Tales by two folk lore specialists, illustrated in black and white with artistry and accuracy. Brief tales written for children six to eleven which reveal the customs and ways of thought of West African people in a manner similar to that of *The Jungle Book*. My favorites are "Hungry Spider and the Turtle," and "Guinea Fowl and Rabbit Get Justice." Both children and adults will enjoy their humor and fantasy and their thrusts at human foibles which make them akin to Aesop's *Fables*. Print, paper, and format are excellent.

L. T. S.

The British Isles. By William Sloan. Illustrated by Rafaello Busoni. Holiday House, \$1.00.

Palestine. By Paul V. Falkenberg. Illustrated by Rafaello Busoni. Holiday House, \$1.00.

This reviewer has always felt that this delightfully illustrated, fine series has been too expensive for its 25-page per book text. These two new additions do not escape that criticism. Moreover, probably because the question of both these countries is so close to us all today, she objects to opinions about them being definitely stated without enough mater-

ial presented to allow children to formulate to some extent their own opinions. It would not be fair to take the text, in part, for quotation, but the reader is advised to be aware of this tendency in these two books when she reads for herself. H. R. S.

For Younger Children

How the Automobile Learned to Run.

By M. Ilin. Illustrated by Herbert Kruchman. International Publishers, \$1.25.

Another picture fact book—the story of the automobile from first steam driven wagon of 1769 to the jeeps, buses, and streamlined cars of today. There is plenty of excitement in this informational story of experimenting and experiencing with the horseless carriage. Ages 9-12.

M. E. K.

Rags, an Orphan of the Storm. By Ruth Cromer Weir. Pictures by Alice J. Montgomery. Wilcox & Follett.

We feel sorry immediately for the scared, bedraggled little puppy that the policeman brings to the dog shelter Orphans of the Storm. Kindness and good care make him feel better, and he wishes he could be adopted too like the other dogs. One day a little girl as shy as he is falls in love with him and takes him home with her. Perhaps it is because she has been adopted too that

she understands how he feels, and very soon they both forget to be afraid because they have each other. Eight and nine year olds will read this story eagerly, and all dog lovers will enjoy the illustrations. A. F. C.

Pat 'n' Penny. By Sheena Morey. Illustrated by Martha Scott. Wilcox & Follett, \$1.00.

Everything that big sister Pat does, little sister Penny does on a smaller scale; housework, gardening, baking, sewing. This is a book for little girls three and four years old. It is gay with colored illustrations that are spirited and amusing, and though it relates a series of events rather than telling a story, it should please children.

A. F. C.

Anywhere in the World. By Irma E. Webber. William R. Scott, \$1.50.

This is a science book for young children, ages 4-8, a story of plant and animal adaptation. It answers such questions as, "Why do trees look dead in winter?" and "Why do camels live in the desert?" By way of simple, well-printed text, and clear, colored illustrations, Dr. Webber explores the fascinating and ingenious ways in which plants and animals are especially adapted to live where they do. She starts with those of the temperate zone which children can see about them and then

applies the idea of adaptation to the plants and animals of the jungle, the desert, and the Arctic. This book by a distinguished botanist will answer accurately many questions of observing youngsters and will stimulate others to look at the world around them with greater interest.

L. T. S.

Animal Hide and Seek. Told and Drawn by Dahlov Ipcar. William R. Scott, \$1.00.

A beautifully illustrated simple science book for youngsters 4-8 which clearly explains how familiar animals, birds, and insects live and use their protective coloration to hide from their enemies. L. T. S.

Here Comes Daddy. By Winifred Milius. Illustrated by the author. William R. Scott, \$1.25.

Intended to be a first book about transportation for two and three year olds, this tells the story about a boy and his cat who stand on the corner waiting for Daddy to come home. They see wagons, trucks, moving vans, street cleaners, and finally the bus that brings the one they are expecting.

As a librarian I object to the format of this book. The pages tear out of the rings with which it is held together; in one place the sentences extend across two pages. Even at an early age children can get

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the feel of reading across a page from left to right, and this should not be violated. There is no title page so that if the cover is lost, vital information concerning the identity of the book is also gone.

The three-color illustrations are gay and entertaining, the pages well designed, and I should think they would appeal to children. However, if the emphasis is intended to be on methods of transportation, I think it fails.

A. F. C.

More Please, the Hungry Animal Book. By Dorothy Kunhardt. Simon and Schuster.

This novelty book for very small children combines action with listening. Each page contains the picture of a different animal ingeniously arranged so that the mouth is a hole into which paper food can be placed. There is a box containing all the necessary food. This might be entertaining on a train trip, or for a child sick in bed. However I imagine the pieces of food would soon disappear in the normal activity of a child, but for short time use would be fun.

A. F. C.

Hercules The Gentle Giant. By Nina Schneider. Illustrated by Kurt Werth. Roy Publishers, \$2.00.

This old myth retold by Nina Schneider will delight boys and girls from six to ten. A good "read to-

gether" book for parents and child. A book to own and enjoy again and again. The fantasy and realism of this imaginative story is captured in the lovely illustrations by Kurt Werth. A Junior Literary Guild Selection! Ages 6-10. M. E. K.

The Golden Goose, A Grimm's Tale Retold. Pictures by Arnold Edwin Bare. Houghton Mifflin, \$1.00.

An old favorite well done! Nice binding, excellent type, and interesting illustrations by Arnold Bare. Another Nursery Book Series. Ages 3-7.

M. E. K.

Eemie, The Story of a Clown. By Frances Duncombe. Pictures by Marjorie Hill. Henry Holt, \$1.50.

Eemie, an "A" stunt clown, wanted to be a clown in the Biggest Circus in the World. Eemie's experiences trying to invent an original trick warrants laughs for little folks. The tricolor, gay illustrations by Marjorie Hill are full action and humor. The price seems high, especially for those with a limited budget. Ages 6-8.

M. E. K.

Brer Rabbit Rides The Fox. Told by Marion Palmer. Illustrated by Walt Disney. Grosset and Dunlap, \$1.00.

To adults fond of Uncle Remus stories in the original text and illus-

sations this edition seems too Disneyish to be pleasing. Children love Uncle Remus and his stories even without these movie-like illustrations and teachers might do well to consider merits of both editions before deciding.

I. G.

Brother, Baby and I. By Pelagie Doane. Illustrated by Pelagie Doane. Grosset & Dunlap, \$2.00.

Forty-four poems and rhymes intended to be read to small children. They begin with rhymes for rising and dressing, and proceed with a variety of activities, ending with jingles about going to bed. Colorful illustrations on nearly every page make the book attractive. I. G.

Can You Count? By Janet D. Schintz. David McKay, \$1.50.

An attractive book. The clever number rhymes and funny antics of ten block bears will entertain the tiny tots in early number experiences. Ages 4-7.

M. E. K.

The Story of Your Coat. By Clara Hollos. Illustrations by Herbert Kruchman. International Publishers, \$1.50.

A picture fact book full of information, understanding and appreciation of the source of our clothing and the cooperation of many different people on many different machines in many different places. Ages 6-10.

M. E. K.

Whitey and Jinglebob. By Glenn Rounds. Grosset & Dunlap, \$.50.

This lively story of Whitey and Jinglebob and their experiences learning to be ranch hands could happen on any ranch where there is an old-time cattle man like Uncle Torval and two ten year old boys that want to be real cowboys. A story Parade Book with colorful illustrations. Ages 7-11.

M. E. K.

Tea Party in Plum pudding Street. By Lois Maloy. Grosset & Dunlap, \$.50.

A most attractive book. The adorable blue and white illustrations capture the atmosphere of old New England and the feeling of the story! It is a sweet story about a sea captain's seven year old daughter. Her life with her mother and two aunts was quiet and somewhat dull. All of this was changed when Cap'n Bill came home with a surprise. Ages 7-10.

M. E. K.

The Flying House. By Ruth and Latrobe Carroll. Illustrated by Ruth Carroll. Macmillan, \$2.00.

A fanciful adventure that involves amusing situations for the Bing family as they travel over New England in their helicopter home. Ages 8-12.

M. E. K.

Joey and Patches. By Margaret S. Johnson and Helen Lossing Johnson. William Morrow, \$2.00.

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Joey and Patches are two lively and appealing kittens. Their love for each other and their mischievous experiences will appeal to children. Another wholesome book for those who have just learned to read for themselves. Ages 5-8. M. E. K.

Surprise for Timmy. By George and Doris Hauman. Macmillan, \$1.25.

This is a story with wholesome childhood experiences and real human interest. The youngest will enjoy having it read to them. Type, length of sentences and easy vocabulary will stimulate those who have just learned the fun of reading for themselves. Ages 5-8. M. E. K.

Benjamin Busybody By Lorraine Beim. Picture by Violet LeMont. Harcourt, Brace, \$2.00.

Benjamine is so busy from morning to night that he is called Benjamine Busybody by his parents. The only time he is really quiet is when he is in bed and even then he is busy sleeping. Double page illustrations in color will appeal to picture book age children. K. E. H.

We Three. By A. S. Artley and Lilian Gray. Wm. S. Gray, Reading Director, Stories by Ruth Wagner. Illustrated by Ellen Seguer. Scott, Foresman, \$.96.

The first of a series of "Reading for Independence" books for primary grades. Can be used at or near com-

pletion of work in "Our New friends." Stories of simple, everyday life. Teaching suggestions are included. Colored illustrations, general makeup and print good. M. E. K.

The Night Before Christmas. By Clement C. Moore. Illustrated by Cornelius DeWitt. Simon & Schuster, \$.50. (A Little Golden Book).

Bound in boards, and with attractive illustrations in color and black and white, this is a fair value for the money. It won't stand hard wear; the back of our review copy had become loose before we received it, but with the application of a little glue now and then, it may last long enough to be remembered with the affection it deserves.

It is good, but not good enough. It raises the question, Why isn't good workmanship a matter of pride? It would take very little to make this book just right—an excellent value instead of a fair one. D. E. S.

Chipmunk Moves. By Margaret Friskey. Illustrated by Lucia Patton. David McKay, \$1.00.

Children 3-6 who enjoy *The Seven Diving Ducks* will like this tale of how Chipmunk built himself a new house in the orchard, (a fascinating ground plan is portrayed) and of how he showed his new neighbor, Ground Squirrel, it isn't the

number of stripes you wear on your coat, but what you *are*, that counts. A delightful story which is also a first lesson in good race relations.

L. T. S.

Scuffy the Tugboat. By Gertrude Crampton. Illustrated by Tibor Gergely. Simon and Schuster, \$2.50.

Another Little Golden Book. The story of a little red tugboat who wouldn't sail in the bathtub because he felt he was able to do more important things. So he ran away down a brook, to a big river, and then to the sea. He saw many interesting things which Miss Crampton describes and Mr. Gergely paints for the most part in full color, all for the information of readers 3-6. L. T. S.

Away Went Tippy! By Harriett Osgood. Illustrated by Connie Moran. Wilcox & Follett, \$2.00.

A small tale of Nancy taking her cat, Tippy, on the train and losing him in the station. Situations are quite improbable and the story seems forced. The format of the book is pleasing.

I. G.

Linda Just Right. By Jane Miller. Pictures by Givens-Duzak. Vanguard, \$1.00.

Twelve full-page photographs show three-year old Linda in "just right" situations for a girl her size. A short text accompanies each pic-

ture. Nursery school youngsters will probably enjoy looking at this book.

I. G.

Oley The Sea Monster. Written and Illustrated by Marie Hall Ets. Viking, \$1.50.

One hundred forty small black and white cartoons with captions tell the story of a baby seal and his adventures after he is separated from his mother. The pictures are too small for comfortable study and the lack of numbers to indicate whether one reads the pictures across the page or up and down the page is confusing.

I. G.

Steppladder Babies. By Alta McIntyre. Illustrated by Fiore Mastri. Wilcox & Follett, \$1.00.

A pair of robins built a nest on the next-to-the-top step of a stepladder. Mother Robin laid three eggs and hatched them. A squirrel and a cat were interested, but didn't do any damage. In the fall the robin family flew South. The illustrations seem amateurish.

D. E. S.

Hear Our Prayer. Illustrated by Helen Page. Garden City Publishing Co. Pp. 76. \$.50.

A Catholic edition of a collection of prayers for children. The illustrations are appealing and will catch the imaginations of the children 3-6 for whom they are intended. Some of the prayers the youngsters will live and will say with understanding.

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

A number of them are much too adult and no amount of pictorial illustration will prevent their repetition from being anything but one of rote.

L. T. S.

Bobbs-Merill Company, Indianapolis,
Ind.

Coward-McCann, 2 West 45th St.,
New York 19, N.Y.

Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 393
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West 49th St., New York, N.Y.
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